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# BIBLIOTHECA PLATONICA

An Exponent of the Platonic Philosophy.

✦ EDITED BY ✦

THOS. M. JOHNSON.



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# DAMASKIOS THE PLATONIC SUCCESSOR: DOUBTS AND SOLUTIONS ABOUT FIRST PRINCIPLES.

Translated from the Original Greek.

## PRELIMINARY.

**BIOGRAPHICAL.**—Damaskios, the last outward link of the great golden chain of the Platonic Succession, entered this mundane sphere at Damascus, Syria, in about 480 A. D. Unfortunately we know but little of his personal life. He received his elementary education in his native city, and then attended the Alexandrian schools. For three years he was a pupil of the Sophist Theon. He became an accomplished rhetorician, and taught the rhetorical science for about nine years with signal success. But he was not to be a mere teacher of eloquence—something far more important was to be his life work. During the first years of his professional career he heard, besides other noted teachers of philosophy, the celebrated Ammonios, the son of Hermias, expounding and illustrating the mathematical and astrological sciences in connection with the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy. The lectures of Ammonios awakened his natural desires for speculation and divine things which had hitherto been latent. Burning with the love of divine wisdom, which daily increased, he finally became utterly disgusted with the oratorical science, abandoned his school, and devoted himself wholly to the study of philosophy. Damaskios having learned all that Ammonios could teach him, and this was a great deal, went to Athens in order that he might profit by the lectures of Marinos, Isidoros and Zenototos, and with the determination to enter into a philosophic intimacy with those great masters of wisdom: for the Athenian Platonists lived as a society, and zealously pursued the study of divine philosophy in all its branches. To these philosophic teachers the genius of Damaskios and his ardor for learning so commended him that, subsequently, when Isidoros and

Zenodotos had successively retired from the Scholarchship, he was deemed worthy to continue the golden chain of the Platonic Succession. He did not long, however, exercise the functions of Scholarch. Every since the accession of Constantine misnamed "the great" to the imperial throne, the Platonic philosophers, who were ardent champions of the ancient faith, had been harassed and oppressed—except during the brief reign of Julian—in many ways, so that their schools had been kept open under great and numerous difficulties. In A. D. 529 the intolerant Justinian issued an infamous edict suppressing the Platonic school, and three years later, viz. in 532, confiscated its property. The effects of the execution of this maliciously unjust edict were world-wide. "The fall of philosophy was naturally succeeded by the darkness of delusion and ignorance; by the spirit of wild fanaticism and intolerant zeal; by the loss of courage and virtue; and by the final dissolution of the empire of the world. She was ruined indeed, but not without revenge. War, pestilence and famine were the scourges of a prince who had presumed to demolish her schools, and intercept the diffusion of her sacred light; and his reign was disgraced by an irreparable decrease of mankind in the most fertile regions of the earth. We may add, too, that his dominions were alarmed by the dreadful blaze of two mighty comets whose malignant light foretold approaching calamities and war; and signified perhaps the establishment of religious anarchy, and the commencement of barbarous impiety and folly. And to complete this catalogue of prodigies and desolation, every year of his reign was marked with violent earthquakes of uncommon duration, and incredible extent. The whole surface of the Roman empire was agitated with horrid internal convulsions; and enormous chasms were formed by the earth's strong vibrations. Large bodies were discharged into the air, and the sea concurring in the general ruin overflowed or deserted its natural bounds, by alternately advancing and retreating with accumulated majesty and strength; and a mountain was torn from Libanus and hurled into the waves, amidst the dreadful tossings of the deep. History after this period exhibits nothing but religious dissensions, despicable councils, and bigoted sects; the enmity of *saints*, and the discord of Nestorians and Jacobites, Maronites and Armenians, Copts and Abyssinians. Religious war and pious rebellion succeeded to philosophical theory; and Nestor and Cyril led the confused and clamorous dance of ecclesiastical disputation.\*"

Disgusted with the tyrannical government of Justinian, and persecuted by the ignorant fanatics who then had full sway, the chiefs of the Platonic School, viz. Damaskios, Simplikios, Eulalios, Priskianos, Hermeias, Diogenes and Isidoros, determined to retire temporarily into Persia, which country was then ruled by the famous Chosroes (Khosroo) surnamed Noushirvan or the "generous soul". "The long and beneficent reign of this prince is mentioned by Oriental poets as the golden age of Persia. His virtues, his wise and efficient measures

\*Thomas Taylor.



for the welfare of his subjects, his conquests, his liberal encouragement of literature and science, attested by the numerous colleges and libraries which he founded, all rendered it worthy of this eminent distinction." The philosophers left the Roman empire in A. D. 532. They were cordially received by Chosroes, who provided liberally for their wants. Chosroes was well acquainted with and admired greatly the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, and had caused all the writings of the Academic sage to be translated into Persian. It is not to be presumed, however, that he had penetrated into the depths of the Platonic philosophy—Julian alone of all emperors did *that*—though he doubtless knew as much of it as many Platonic expounders (so-called) of this 19th century.

Damaskios and his associates were highly esteemed by the King and others of the philosophic class, but there is reason to believe that the Magi were hostile to them, and secretly turned the rabble against them. Chosroes held many important and interesting conferences with the philosophers, a partial report of which by Priskianos is still extant, in a Latin translation only, the Greek original being unfortunately lost. This work, which is of great value, is entitled *Prisciani Philosophi Solutiones eorum de quibus dubitavit Chosroes Persarum Rex*.\*

In A. D. 533 the philosophers decided to return to their native country. Chosroes in a treaty of peace made with Justinian at this time expressly stipulated—he it said to his eternal honor—that Damaskios and his associates should be allowed to live in perfect peace and security.

We know practically nothing about the life of Damaskios after his return from Persia. It is probable that he lived in Alexandria, and that his immortal intellect, released from the corporeal shackles, soared aloft about 550 A. D.

Damaskios possessed great learning and intellectual power, and an unblemished moral character. Photios charges him with "impiety," but it must be remembered that "Paganism" and "impiety" were synonymous terms in the estimation of the worthy Patriarch who had a hearty, fanatical dislike of every adherent of the ancient faith. It may be added that Photios, though a distinguished literary man, lacked the philosophic insight and therefore was incapable of justly appreciating either the character or the writings of a philosopher.

The barbarous edict of Justinian suppressed only the outward or public existence of the Platonic School. Secretly the principles of Divine Philosophy continued to be disseminated, and link after link was added to the Golden Chain of the Platonic Succession, which did not stop. The Platonic Sun has never ceased to enlighten an otherwise benighted world with its beneficent rays: its light has shone, perpetually and unwaveringly, though at times the greater part of mankind is too stupid to perceive and participate of it.

\*Edited by Fr. Dubner, Paris, 1855; and by Ingram Bywater, Berlin, 1886, unquestionably the best edition.

**BIBLIOGRAPHICAL:**—It must be conceded that the world has experienced no greater misfortune, if the matter is viewed from an intellectual standpoint, than the loss of a large number of the writings of the Platonic Philosophers. We lack some of the productions of the Divine Master of the Academy himself. All of his poems and tragedies, except a few epigrams and an epic fragment of dubious authenticity, and probably several dialogues, are lost. Nor have we the sublime Discourses about Philosophy, and about the Good, which, if not actually written by the Master's own hand, were accurate reports or notes of the private lectures which he delivered to the inner circle of his disciples. The loss of these lectures is a calamity of the first magnitude. Many precious volumes by Porphyrios, Iamblichos, Syrianos, Proklos, Damaskios, etc., have utterly perished, or were lost, through either criminal carelessness or fanaticism. The discovery of these books—and there is a chance that all or some of them may be still in existence—would be of more real importance, and advance more the highest interests of mankind, than the invention of a thousand mechanical contrivances or the holding of a hundred "world fairs," designed for the promotion of a purely material civilization. To the genuine philosopher the finding of Porphyrios' treatise *On the Ascent or Return of the Soul* (*περὶ ἀνόδου τῆς ψυχῆς*), for instance, would be of incalculably greater interest and value than the discovery of the north pole, the construction of a transatlantic railroad, or any other of the thousand and one trifling schemes which occupy the time and attention of the multitude. None of these contribute anything to the real intellectual or spiritual progress of mankind.

The majority of the writings of Damaskios are not extant, so far as is known. The treatise entitled *Doubts and Solutions concerning First Principles* has been preserved substantially entire. Competent critics have referred to this profound work in the highest terms of admiration. Lucas Holstenius says that it is replete with the most subtle discussions (*plenum subtilissimis disputationibus*); Franciscus Patricius pronounces it to be truly incomparable (*rere incomparabilem*); Villoison declares that it contains most precious fragments of the ancient philosophy and metaphysics (*pretiosissima veteris Philosophiæ, et metaphysicæ præsertim, fragmenta*); Prof. Kopp describes it as a book full of the most abstruse investigations concerning intelligible things (*liber abstrusissimis quaestionibus de rebus intelligibilibus refertus*); and Thomas Taylor justly avers that Damaskios in this book "has preserved a most valuable store of recondite wisdom, and unfolded some of the sublimest mysteries of ancient theology." The work is essentially of a metaphysical character. Damaskios is a wonderfully acute dialectician. He discusses and solves the most subtle questions concerning the highest subjects apprehensible by the human intellect. He alone who is able to rise above sensuous perceptions and cognize universals can comprehend and appreciate this book.

A fragment of the work *On Principles* was edited by J. C. Wolf in his *Anecdota Græca*, Hamburg, 1722.

Prof. Kopp's edition (Frankfort, 1826), which is excellent in many respects so far as it goes, contains only the first part or about half of this great treatise. The learned world is now eagerly expecting a complete, accurate edition, enriched with philological and philosophic annotations, of this work by Prof. Ch. Emile Ruelle of Paris, France. M. Ruelle is a Greek scholar of the first class, full of Platonic ardor, well versed in philosophic lore, and his edition will doubtless satisfy every reasonable expectation.

We are also promised an edition of Damaskios by Prof. Aemilius Heitz, of Strassburg, Germany, which we hope will speedily appear. Prof. Heitz contributed an interesting paper on Damaskios (*Der Philosoph Damascius*) to the *Strassburger Abhandlungen zur Philosophie*, 1884.

In translating this remarkable book I could not avail myself of any previous English version, for none has ever been published. Parts of it were translated by Thomas Taylor, and his version, carefully revised, has been adopted. Unfortunately he translated but a mere fragment of the whole work.

There are extant some interesting extracts from a Commentary of Damaskios on the Aristotelian treatise *De Coelo*, and parts of the Life of the philosopher Isidoros from his History of Philosophy. This last is of special interest and value, and gives much curious information about Isidoros and his friends and pupils.

Damaskios wrote Commentaries on the Timaios, Phaidon and First Alkibiades, and treatises On Time, On Space, On Number, and on Marvellous Things, all of which are lost.

Commentaries on the Physics of Aristoteles and the Aphorisms of Hippokrates, the completion of the admirable Commentary of Proklos on the Parmenides, a work on Problems, and an Epigram, have been attributed to Damaskios—but it seems questionable whether these books were written by him.

For an exhaustive account of the various writings of Damaskios, description of MSS., etc., we refer the reader to Prof. Ruelle's excellent monograph, entitled: *Le Philosophe Damascius: Etude sur sa vie et ses ouvrages suivie de Neuf Morceaux Inédits extraits du Traité des Premiers principes et Traduits en Latin*. Paris, 1861. This book richly deserves to be reprinted.

I. Primarily we must determine whether the one principle of the whole is above and apart from all things, or whether this principle is something of all things and is as it were the summit of those things which proceed from it? And shall we say that all things co-exist with this first principle, or that they are posterior to and emanate from it? If any one should assert this, in what way would the primary principle be external to all things? For the all is

simply that of which no thing whatever is absent. But the principle is absent, [since it is not one of all things], and therefore all things are not simply inferior to the principle but apart from it. Moreover, all things must be considered as many finite things: for things infinite will plainly not be all. Nothing therefore is absolutely external to all things. For totality or allness (*παντότης*) is as it were a certain limit and enclosure, of which the first principle is the upper boundary, and the last procession from the principle the lower boundary,—so that all things therefore co-exist with the boundaries. Again, the principle is co-ordinated with the things which proceed from it—for it is said to be, and is, the principle of them. The cause is likewise co-ordinated with its effects, and that which is first with the things subsequent to the first. But since there is one co-ordination of many things these are said to be all; and so the principle is also among all things. Summarily, we understand by the phrase 'all things' every thing which we conceive to exist in any way whatsoever; and it is plain that the principle must be conceded as having an existence. Hence we are accustomed to speak of the whole city as the governor and the governed, and of the whole race as the generator and the generated. But if all things co-exist with the principle, will not the principle be something of all things, since it is assumed in conjunction with them? The one co-ordination therefore of all things, which we say is all, must be apprehended as without a principle, and without a cause, in order that we may not proceed *ad infinitum*. It is necessary however that everything should be either the principle, or emanate from it: therefore all things are either the principle or a procession from it. On the latter hypothesis the principle will not co-exist with all things, but will be external to the whole as the principle of the things proceeding from it. On the former hypothesis what will be that which will proceed from all things as from a principle, and will be external to all things, even to the lowest processions,

as the completion of all things? For this must certainly be ranked among all things. Hence a pure conception of the nature of all things posits something other than all things: all things therefore are neither the principle nor from the principle.\*

Moreover, all things exist in a certain respect in multitude and a certain diversity: for we cannot conceive of the whole existing without these elements. In what way, therefore, do this certain diversity and multitude directly appear? Or, are not all things everywhere in diversity and multitude? But is the One the summit of the many, and the Monad the union or united subsistence of things which are separated from each other,—and is the One more simple than the Monad? In the first place it may be noted that every Monad is (potentially) number, though as yet subsisting contractedly and in profound union, and therefore the Monad is also all things. Again, the One is not something of the many: for, if it was, it would give completion to the many in the same manner as each of other things. But as numerous as are the many according to a certain division, so numerous likewise will be the One prior to division according to the totally impartible. For the One is not one as that which is smallest, as Speusippos appears to have thought, but it is the One as comprehending all things: for by virtue of its own simplicity it accedes to all things, and renders them unical. Hence all things proceed from it, because it is itself all things prior to all. And as that which is united is prior to things divided, so the One is all things prior to the many. But when we thoroughly apprehend the nature of all things, we do not predicate all things alike, but in a threefold mode at least, viz. unically, unitedly, and multiplicably.† All things therefore are from the

\*For the principle so far as it is the principle ranks among all things.

†We think all things unically or as one, when we apprehend them as an impartible whole; unitedly, when we contemplate them in mutual union and connection; multiplicably, when they are viewed in separation, or as distinct individuals so to speak.

One, and with reference to the One, as we are accustomed to say. If, then, speaking more plainly, we denominate things which subsist in multitude and separation *all things* we must posit as the principles of these the United, and in a still greater degree the One. But if we consider these two as all things, and assume them in conjunction with all other things, according to habitude and co-ordination with them, as previously said, we must then investigate another principle prior to all things, which it is no longer proper to consider as in any way or respect all things, nor must it be co-ordinated with those things proceeding from it. If therefore some one should say that the One though it is all things which exist in any manner whatever, yet is *one* prior to all things, and is more unical than all things,—since it is one *per se* but all things as the cause of all, and according to a co-ordination with all, and, to speak briefly, is all things secondarily, and *one* primarily—theasserter of this hypothesis will attribute the first duplicity (twofoldness) to the One itself, and we who are now separated by twofoldness from the simplicity of the One will become still more multiplied or divided: for the One by virtue of its nature is all things in the most simple or impartible manner. But though this should be said it is nevertheless necessary that the First Principle of all should be absolutely exempt from all things, from the most simple allness or totality, and even from a simplicity absorbing all things such as is that of the One.

II. Our soul therefore divines that the Principle of all conceivable things is beyond all things, and in no respect whatever co-ordinated with them. Neither accordingly can it be rightly called principle or cause, nor that which is first, nor that which is prior to or beyond all things. In fact it can scarcely be spoken of as all things in any respect whatever: nor, to speak summarily, can it be adequately described, conceived, or imagined. For whatever we conceive or imagine is either something of all things — and this approaches

nearer the truth—or the pure, abstract form conceived is the whole or all things itself: and this we will find even though we may ascend, analysing or purifying the forms (species) presented to the intellect, and likewise ridding or purifying the intellect itself of erroneous and alien notions, to the absolutely simple, which is comprehensive of all, being as it were the uttermost circumference not only of beings but also of non-beings. For of beings that which is united and wholly inseparable is the highest, since every being is formed of elements [which are either *bound* and *infinity*, or the progeny of these]. But the One is simply the highest of the many: for we have no conception of anything more simple and pure than that which is absolutely and radically *one*,—which if we denominate the principle and cause, the first and the most simple, these and all other characteristics or attributes are there, *i. e.* in the inaccessible and inexpugnable citadel of its nature, alone by virtue of its unical essence. But we, unable to apprehend the nature of the One, are by reason of this fact separated from it, and can only predicate of it our own distracted and divided conceptions, unless we reject even these; because *the many* is not in harmony with *the one*. Hence the One can be neither known nor adequately named; for, if so, it would be in this respect many. Or, are these things in the One by virtue of its unical nature? For the nature of the One contains all things, or rather produces all things, and there is no thing which lacks the unical characteristic. Hence all things are as it were evolved from the One, and it is therefore rightly named cause and first, last and highest, the absolute apex of all things, and the one nature of the many,—not that nature in things which proceeds from the One but that which is prior to things and generates their power, and which is the most indivisible summit of all things whatsoever, and the greatest comprehension of all things which in any respect are called wholes. But if the One is causal and comprehensive of things, what ascent will there



be beyond the One? Surely we do not then strive in vain, extending ourselves to that which is nothing, for that which is not even *one* does not exist at all, strictly speaking. Is it possible that there is something beyond even the One? The many, however, require nothing other than the One,—and hence the One alone is the cause of the many. And the One is wholly the cause, since it is necessary that the cause of the many should be *the one* alone. Nothing is certainly not the cause: for nothing is the cause of nothing. Nor is the *many* the cause: because, so far as things are many they lack co-ordination. Again, the many would not be *one cause*. But if the many are causes, they will not be causes of each other, since they lack co-ordination or union and revolve in a circle [the same things being causes and the things caused]. Each therefore will be the cause of itself, and thus there will be no cause of the many. It is therefore necessary that the One should be the cause of the many, and likewise the cause of their co-ordination: for there is a certain harmonious co-ordination or union which unites the many to each other.

III. If therefore some one investigating this matter should say that the One is a sufficient principle, and should cap his arguments by the statement that we have neither conception nor conjecture more simple than that of the One, and should ask in what way we can posit anything beyond our highest conjecture and conception, we must allow him the doubt. For a speculation of this kind appears to be [from a sensuous standpoint] inaccessible and inconceivable, but nevertheless from things more known to us we must extend the ineffable parturitions of our intuitive intellect to the ineffable co-sensation so to speak of this sublime truth. (It is difficult to see, however, in what way the word '*co-sensation*' can be used in this connection). For as that which subsists without and apart from is in every respect more honorable than that which subsists in habitude or relation, and the unco-ordinated is better than the co-ordinated, the

theoretic than the social life, Kronos than the Demiurgos (Zeus) for instance, being than forms, and *the one* than the many, of which *the one* is the principle,—so, in brief, that which transcends causes and effects, principles and subjects, and everything of this kind, is far more honorable than these, and must not be posited in any co-ordination and habitude. For *the one* is naturally prior to the many, that which is most simple to things more composite, and that which is most comprehensive to the things which it comprehends. Thus, if you are willing so to speak, *the first* is beyond and superior to all such opposition, not only that which is in things co-ordinate but even that which takes place from its subsistence as the first.

IV. The One and the United therefore, and those things proceeding from these, are all many and separated: for both the One and the United causally contain multitude as numerous as that which is unfolded from them. However, the One is not less *unical*, if indeed it is not more so, because the many or separate multitude is posterior to and not in it; and the United is no less united because it is a contraction or union of things separable prior to separation. Each of these therefore is all things, either according to co-ordination or according to their respective natures. But all things cannot be first, or the principle: not according to co-ordination, because the last of things would be with them; and not one of them alone, because *this one* would be at the same time all things by virtue of its unical nature,—but we have not yet discovered that principle which is absolutely beyond all things. We may add, that *the one* is the summit of the many, as the cause of the things proceeding from it,—and, likewise, that we form a conception of *the one* according to a purified conjecture or apprehension (*ὑπόνοιαν*) extended to that which is most simple and comprehensive. But that which is most venerable must necessarily be incomprehensible by all conceptions and conjectures: for, as in other things that which always soars beyond our conception is more honora-

ble than that which is more obvious, so that which escapes from even all of our conjectures will be most honorable. If this be the case, it is *nothing*. But *nothing* is twofold—one better than *the one*, the other lower than sensuous things. If also we strive in vain in asserting these things, striving in vain is likewise twofold—the one falling into the ineffable, the other into that which in no respect whatever has any subsistence: the latter, as Plato says,\* is also ineffable according to the worse, but the former according to the better. If we inquire as to the use or advantage of it, it may be said that the most necessary advantage of all others is, that thence as from an adytum all things proceed, from the ineffable, and in an ineffable manner. For neither do they proceed as *the one* produces the many, nor as *the united* things separated, but ineffably, as the ineffable similarly produces all things. But if in predicating these things of the Supreme Principle, viz. that it is ineffable, that it is no one of all things, that it is incomprehensible, we subvert our course of reasoning, it is necessary to understand that these predicates are the appellatives and perceptions of our intellectual parturitions, undertaking to explore its nature,—and which, standing in the vestibules of the adytum, so to speak, announce nothing definite pertaining to the ineffable, but signify our emotions ( $\pi\alpha\theta\eta$ ) about it, and our doubts and disappointments—and even this not clearly, but through indications to such as are able to apprehend these subjects.

V. But is it not apparent that our intellectual parturitions experience these things about the One, and in a similar manner are solicitous and subverted? For the One, says Plato, if it *is*, is not *the One*. But if it is not no assertion is adapted to it, so that neither can there be a negation of it, nor can any name be given to it,—for a name is not simple. Neither is there any opinion nor science of it,—for these are not simple: neither is intellect itself simple. So that the

\*Sophistes: 244.

One is in every respect unknown and ineffable. What then? Shall we seek something beyond even the ineffable? Or, perhaps, Plato leads us ineffably through *the one* as a medium to the ineffable beyond the One, which is now the subject of discussion, by an ablation of *the One*, in the same manner as he leads us to *the one itself* by an ablation of other things. For that he posits a purified (exempt) *one* is evident from his *Sophistes*, where he demonstrates that it exists prior to being, itself by itself. And if, having ascended as far as to *the one* Plato is silent, it is right that he should be perfectly silent, according to the manner of the ancients, about things in every respect unspeakable: for the discourse was indeed most dangerous, in that it fell on ignorant and stupid ears. Indeed, when discoursing concerning that which in no respect has any existence he subverts his assertions, and is fearful of falling into the sea of dissimilitude or, rather, of unsubsisting void (*ἀνυπστάτου κενότητος*). But if demonstrations do not accord with *the one* it is by no means wonderful: for they are more composite than is fit. Demonstrations indeed are not adapted to being, since they are formal, or rather not even to forms, strictly speaking, as they are logical. Or, is it not Plato himself who in his *Epistles*\* evinces that we have nothing which is significant of form,—neither type, nor name, nor discourse, nor opinion, nor science? For intuitive intellect alone can by its projecting energies apprehend ideas, and this we cannot possess so long as we confine ourselves to mere logical exercises. Nor will a formal intellection accord with *the united*, and with being. And if at any time we should project (*προβαλλοίμεθα*) a contracted intellection, even this is incompatible and not in accord with *the One*. If, further, we energize according to the most unical apprehension and through this mystically perceive *the one itself*, yet even this is expanded only as far as to *the one*, if there is a knowledge of *the one*—a point not yet determined. Nevertheless [despite all difficul-

\*See the seventh Epistle of Plato.

ties] let us apply ourselves to the discussion of things of such great importance through indications and conjectures, being purified in respect to unusual conceptions, and led through analogies and negations—and, not content with what we possess in reference to these, advancing from the less to the more honorable: for by pursuing this method we shall accomplish something. Shall we say therefore that the Primary Principle is so absolutely ineffable that we should not predicate of it that it is even ineffable? And that *the one* is ineffable, as flying from all composition of discourse and name, and all essential distinction between the known and the knower, and that it is to be apprehended in a manner most simple and comprehensive? And, further, that it is not one alone as the property of one, but as one which is all things, and prior to all things, and not one which is something of all things? These parturitions of the soul render it alert, and purify it so that it may be able to ascend to *the one simply*, and to that which is truly the one principle of all things. As we have a conception of the one which dwells in us—[the summit or flower of our essence]—because it is more proximate and allied to us, we should the more readily seize and follow any trace of the Absolute One. But, given the hypothesis of a particular thing, and the transition to the universal or simple is easy. So, even if we in no respect reach the Absolute One, it is certainly advisable to reason dialectically, starting from *the pure One* which dwells in us, about that which far transcends all things. *The One*, therefore, is thus effable, and thus ineffable: and that which is beyond the one, *the totally ineffable*, should be adored in the most profound silence, and prior to this by the most perfect [sensuous] ignorance which despises all knowledge.

VI. In the second place, let us see in what way the Absolute Principle is said to be perfectly unknown. For if this be literally true, how can we predicate all these things of it? We certainly do not elucidate by much discussion about things of which we are ignor-

ant. But if the Primary Principle is really unco-ordinated with being, and without habitude or relation to all things, and is nothing of all things, nor even *the one itself*,—these very things constitute its nature, knowing which we are encouraged, and are zealous in our endeavors to predicate other things of it. As to its being unknown: we either know that it is unknown, or we do not. If the latter, how can we say that it is perfectly unknown? And if the former, it is therefore known at least in this respect. Or, shall we say that it is known that the unknown is unknown? Again, we cannot deny one thing of another, without knowing that which is the subject of the negation; nor can we say that it is not this or that when we can in no respect apprehend it. One who knows it, or does not know it, cannot say either that it exists, or does not exist, as Sokrates says in the Theaitetos. How therefore can we deny of that of which we are perfectly ignorant the things which we know? This would be similar to the action of some man, blind from his birth, who should affirm for instance that heat did not subsist in color. Or, perhaps, he will justly say that color is not hot. Heat may be felt, and therefore he could know this by the touch; but he knows nothing of color except that it is not tangible: for he knows that he does not know it. Such a knowledge indeed is not a knowledge of color, but of his own ignorance. And we, also, when we say that the Primary Principle is unknown, do not announce anything of it, but merely state the manner in which we are affected about it (*ἀλλὰ τὸ περὶ αὐτὸ πάθος ἡμῶν ὁμολογοῦμεν*). For neither the non-perception of the blind man, nor his blindness, are in the color, but in himself. The ignorance therefore of that of which we are ignorant is in us. And the knowledge of that which is known is in the knower, and not in the thing known. For if knowledge is in that which is known, being as it were the splendor of it, some one would say that ignorance is in that which is unknown, being as it were the darkness or obscurity of it, according to which it is

unknown and unapparent to all things. The asserter of this, however, would be ignorant that, as blindness is a privation so likewise is all ignorance, and that as is the invisible so is that of which we are ignorant, and which is unknown. In respect to other things therefore the privation of this or that leaves something else. For that which is incorporeal, though invisible is yet intelligible, and that which is non-intelligible is yet something else, perhaps something of those things which are not apprehended by a certain intellection. But the ablation of all knowledge is our ignorance, if we denominate the entirely unknown that about which we close every eye or avenue of sensuous perception (πάν ὄμμα μύομεν).—we must not assert anything of it, as that its nature cannot be discerned by the sight, as may be said of the intelligible; nor that it is not naturally adapted to be apprehended by an essential and abundant intellection, as may be predicated of the One: for it is so unknown that it imparts nothing by which it can be apprehended, nothing which leads to even a conjecture of its nature. Neither do we say that it is unknown in the sense that, being something else, it possesses the characteristics of the unknowable, but it is so essentially unknown that we do not think it right to predicate of it either *being*, or *the one*, or *all things*, or the *principle of all*, or, in brief, *anything*. Neither therefore do the *nothing*, the *being beyond all things*, *supercasual subsistence*, and the *unco-ordinated with all things* constitute the nature of it, but these are only ablations of things inferior to it. In what way therefore do we speak concerning it? Shall we say that, knowing these inferior things, we consider them as useless in respect to the affirmation of that which is totally ineffable? For as that which is beyond some particular knowledge is superior to that which is apprehended by such knowledge, so that which is beyond even all conjecture or suspicion must necessarily be most august or venerable—not that it is directly known to be so, but we are justified in attributing this characteristic to



it because we have in our nature the idea of the most venerable, and because of the manner in which we are moved or affected in relation to it. And this is called a prodigy from its being entirely incomprehensible by our conceptions, though it is known in certain respects by analogy. If that which in a certain respect is unknown, according to a more excellent species of existence, is superior to that which is wholly known,—therefore that which is in every respect unknown according to a better species of existence must necessarily be acknowledged to be supreme, though indeed it may have neither the supreme, nor the most excellent, nor the most venerable: for these are our conceptions about that which entirely escapes all our conceptions and conjectures. Indeed, by the assertion that we can form no conjecture of the Primary Principle we acknowledge that it is most wonderful: for if we should conjecture or suspect anything concerning it we would also investigate that which is prior to the conjecture, and this search would necessarily either proceed to infinity or cease in that which is totally ineffable.



## PHILOSOPHIC MORALITY.\*

There is no better way to excellence, the great teacher of the Akademeia assures us, than to endeavor to be good rather than to seem so. In this consists the quality of all genuine ethics. Morality is the sway of a superior aim. Everything which subsists in appearances, which is apprehended by observation and sensuous perception, is transitory and temporary, and must wane and perish when the cause which gave it existence shall cease to afford it life and vigor. But when we seek to do that which is right, we are reaching forth as with antennae, perhaps, toward the enduring, the permanent, the eternal. The secret of the moral sense and feeling is the presentiment of eternity. Most appropriate, therefore, was the maxim of Kant: "Act always so that the immediate motive of thy will may become a universal rule for all intelligent beings."

The supreme purpose of our life in this world and condition of existence, is discipline. Every experience that we undergo, every event that occurs, has direct relation to that end. In this matter, too, each individual must "minister to himself." We have, each of us, our own lesson to learn, and cannot derive much instruction or even benefit from what another

\*Read at the Symposium given in celebration of Plato's mundane descent on the 7th day of November, 1889, in the Parlors of the Windsor Hotel, Bloomington, Ills., U. S. A.

has done or suffered. It is hardly more befitting to adopt for ourselves the experience of another, than it would be to wear his clothes. The ethics which should govern our action will not be found set forth in a code. Good men, says Emerson, will not obey laws too well. Nothing tends more to bring confusion and death into arts and morals, than this blind imposing upon one period or individual soul, the experience of another person or former age. We may, perhaps, do very well with general notions, but certainly not with specific personal conclusions. The snail that entered the shell of the oyster, found it a wretched dwelling, though it possessed a precious pearl; and the swallow gathering food for the winter after the example of the provident ant, was the reverse of wise.

The right-thinking person will be the law for himself. Our varied experiences have for their end the developing of this condition for us. The ancient sages taught accordingly that manners or ethics are certain qualities or principles which long habit and practice have impressed upon what they denominate the sensuous and irrational part of the mental nature. Moral virtue does not consist in the uprooting or suppressing of the passions and affections. This is not possible, or even desirable. Indeed, if they should be rooted up from our being, the understanding itself would lose its vigor, become torpid, and perhaps even perish outright. It is their province, like that of the fire in the furnace, to impart energy to the whole mental machinery, while the understanding takes note, and, under the inspiration of the superior reason, directs how that energy shall be employed. Mankind act according to their impulses, and the true morality consists in the bringing of these into good order and the disposing of them to laudable purposes.

Casuists have affirmed that our first sense of duty was derived from the concept of what is due to ourselves. This is instinctive in every living being. Even the ethics of the New Testament are founded upon this criterion: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as

thyself;" "he that loveth another hath fulfilled all law." We are able to define what is just to others, by our apperception of what is right for ourselves. These premises, it will be apprehended, will establish selfishness as the measure of moral virtue, and even as its basis. This is by no means so unreasonable as it may seem. Selfishness in its proper place and function is necessary and orderly. It is the first of all our natural dispositions. The babe that we admire and often praise as the emblem of innocence, is hardly less than absolutely selfish. It regards everything about it as its own by right, and every individual as its servant. It knows no higher motive than its own enjoyment. Nor can we, by any art of reasoning, show this to be immoral. It is not necessary to plead that it is right, because the child was born so. We can perceive it from intelligent consideration. The highest good that any individual can accomplish is the highest usefulness of which he is capable. In the case of the babe, its utility, so far as others are concerned, is only possible and in prospect. All that it can perform well is summed up in eating and growing. This is really the state which is usually denominated selfish, and yet we perceive that it is essential to the ulterior purpose of becoming useful.

Probably, we should give a philosophic definition to evil itself. We may have been too prone to restrict our concepts of the operations of the universe to the limits of our own door-yard. What seems like an infringing of order in our brief vision, may be a perfect harmony in the purview of the higher wisdom. In the objectifying of the world of nature as the work or projected outcome from the Divine, it must of necessity be distinct, imperfect, limited, inferior. We apprehend this to be true of every created thing. If it could be otherwise, then man and all the universe would be not simply divine in origin and relative quality, but would also be very God, a co-ordinate Deity. Hence, therefore, imperfection and evil are unavoidable in all derived existence. Yet they are full of

utility. They certainly enable us to obtain the necessary experience and discipline. In this way they are beneficial, and a part of the Divine purpose. The child that never stumbled never learned to walk. The errors of the man of business are his monitors to direct him in the way of certain prosperity. Our own sins and misdoings are essential in an analogous way to our correction and future good conduct. The individual, however, who chooses to continue in these faults and evil conditions, thereby thwarts their beneficial objects. His shortcomings become turpitude. All such, turning their back to the Right, will be certain to "eat the fruit of their own way and be filled with their own devices."

The sense of individual right, which is commonly designated as selfish, will be found capable of exaltation and expansion, till it shall attain the rank and dimension of the widest benevolence. From the consciousness of what is due or belonging to ourselves, proceeds the intelligent apprehending of what is proper and right for another. The child when he comes into contact with playmates will soon learn that every one of them has personal rights with which others may not interfere. It may be only an imperfect conception, yet it is a discipline and will exalt his view of things above the altitude of unmixed selfishness. When in riper years the attraction of sex is superadded, the field and opportunity are afforded for completer and nobler development. It may be insisted that the individual too generally aspires to possess the object of regard, without due regard to the wishes or well-being of the other. In this view, the new emotion will be but a new form of the radical selfish impulse. Nor is it possible, or desirable, that the earlier nature should be superseded. However high the head may reach toward the sky, the feet of necessity rest upon the earth. Even the eagle must come down from its highest flights to solace its wants. The noblest human soul has like need of earthly repose and aliment, without which it will cease its aspirations to

the higher life and thought. Eros, the sages affirm, drew divine order from chaos. The attraction of the sexes inspires a desire of pleasing, which is in itself a tendency toward self-abnegation. In due time the relations of household, neighborhood, and society proceed from this root and perform their office of extending individual aims to universal ends. Selfishness must then be relegated to the background, or it will become manifest as a monster, of arrested growth and hideous deformity.

In its primary office, as impelling us to maintain ourselves in normal health it is permissible, and in the helpless and immature it is entirely laudable. But the person of adult years who shall remain in this rudimentary moral condition, whether living in a wilderness or among the most cultured, is for all that, only a savage. Civilisation, in its genuine sense, is the art of living together; and is vitally dependent upon the just regard of every individual for the rights of each other. Whoever promulgates and lives by the maxim, that "every one must shift for himself," has not passed beyond the confines of uncivilised life. However rich, cultured or scholarly he has yet to learn the simple alphabet of morality. Perhaps we shall find the Pauline ethics, as set forth in the New Testament, our best exposition of moral virtue. It is an indispensable condition of a morality that is to be efficient, says Jacobi, that one shall believe in a higher order of things of which the common and visible is an heterogeneous part that must assimilate itself to the higher; both to constitute but a single realm. Paul has declared all superior virtue to consist in charity, or love to the neighbor, and utterly ignores self-seeking. "No one of us lives for himself," he declares; "and no one dies for himself, but does so for God." Writing to the Korinthian disciples, he extols the various spiritual attainments, and then having included them in one summary, he avows that charity infinitely surpasses them all. He then depicts in glowing terms its superior quality:

"It is forbearing, it is gentle;  
It is never jealous, it never boasts,  
It is not swelling with pride,  
It acts not indecorously,  
It seeks not wealth for itself,  
It is not embittered, nor imputes ill motive,  
It has no delight in wrong-doing  
But rejoices in the truth."

Then, with true philosophic ken, he mentions the various spiritual endowments, as incident to the lower grades of development, and cast into the dark by charity. "When I was a babe," he says, "I prattled, thought and reasoned as one; but when I became man I set the things of babyhood aside." Whoever seeks the general good, the best interests of others, with all his heart, making all advantage to himself a subordinate matter, has passed the term of childhood, and is adult man in full measure and development.

It will be perceived that morality is not a creature of codes, books or teachers. It is always inseparable from personal freedom. It is character and substantial worth as distinguished from factitious reputation and artificial propriety of conduct. The man who keeps all the precepts of the law is not complete till he yields himself and his great possessions to his brethren. The cross of the life eternal may not be taken in the hand, while one grasps eagerly the sub-lunary good.

We thus trace the moral quality in our nature from its incipient manifestation as a duty which we owe to its culmination as a principle by which we are to live. It fades from view as a system enforced by rules and maxims, from being lost in the greater light of its apotheosis as an emanation from a diviner source. We are taught by our experience of results to shun evil and wrong-doing as certain to involve us in difficulty and peril, and now the higher illumination reveals them as a turning aside from the right way, and sinning against the Divine. Our highest duty is to perfect ourselves in every department of our nature by the living of a perfect life,—or, as Plato expresses it, becoming like God as far as possible.—holy, just



and wise. Such is the aim of all philosophy, and it is attained by whomever in earnestness and sincerity pursues the way of justice, and fraternal charity.

ALEXANDER WILDER.



### ON HOLINESS.\*

The metaphysic of Plato is essentially ethical. The *Republic* is the allegoric delineation of the ideal life and order, not in this world but in the "some-where," the region in which souls have their nativity and expansion. The *Laws* will be found to relate more directly to life in this earth, where set rules and artificial order are more or less necessary, and conformity to them is apt to be regarded by superficial minds as the substance of the religious life. Plato, however, is hardly a dogmatic teacher; he gives us a method for ourselves to work by, and leaves us very much to deduce the results on our own account.

In the dialogue of Sokrates and Euthyphron, this mode of instructing is carried to its boldest outcome, and we are led to the concept that not only men must bring their action to the test of justice, but the very gods of Olympus are judged by the same inexorable law. This is not said, but the careful reader sees it implied. Euthyphron is a man or theologist of

\*Read by Mrs. Julia P. Stevens at the Symposium given in celebration of Plato's mundane descent on the 7th day of November, 1889, in the Parlors of the Windsor Hotel, Bloomington, Ills., U. S. A.

great skill in matters relating to divinity. Coming to the Court-room of the Archon-king of Athens, he finds Sokrates in waiting, and enquires his business there. Sokrates replies that Meleitos, whom he does not well know but who appears to be a very sagacious man, has accused him of corrupting the younger men. This astonishes the other, who flatteringly declares that in the attempt to injure Sokrates, he is, as it were, assailing the city itself from the altar and sacred hearth-fire. To the enquiry how this perverting is done, Sokrates explains that he is represented as a maker or introducer of gods, and has been indicted in the behalf of the older ones. This charge was like the allegation about the Apostle Paul. Euthyphron himself has come to make a charge of murder against his own father, who had bound a hired servant for homicide, and by neglect had suffered him to die of cold and hunger. Sokrates asks, is he not afraid lest he should commit an impious action? He replies that he is well acquainted with these matters; at which Sokrates proposes to become his disciple in the confident expectation of being able to answer triumphantly the accusations of Meleitos.

He then asks whether piety (*hosiotés*) is not identical with itself in every act, and impiety likewise similar to itself. Euthyphron replies: "Most assuredly." Then Sokrates asks him to tell what is piety or holiness, and what is impiety. After some evasion, he explains that that which is pleasing to the gods is holy, and that what is not pleasing to them is impious. Sokrates ironically expresses great gratification at this definition, but entreats to be further convinced. It had been said that the gods quarrelled and were at variance with each other, and even that they cherished enmities. That which is hateful to some gods appeared to be pleasing to others. It thus transpires that they differ about specific actions; some of them saying that they have been done justly, and others that they are unjust.

The conclusion seems palpable, but Sokrates

adroitly refrains from suggesting it. The criterion of holy action and impiety is superior to all the gods of Olympus and the chthonian regions. It must be the will and emanation of a Being to whom they all are subject and subordinate.

"Shall we make this correction?" he asks; "shall we say that what *all the gods* hate is impious, and what they love is holy, but that what some love and the others hate is neither or both?" To this Euthyphron assents, but his questioner gives him no rest. "The gods love holiness; they love it because it is holy, but it is not holy because they love it. Then they do not love it because it is pleasing to them, and it is not because it is pleasing that it is holy." This vexes the mantis, and so he shifts the enquiry. "Every thing that is holy should be just." He entreats Euthyphron to help him out, so that he may answer his Phoenician accuser—the lank-haired, thin-bearded, hook-nosed Meleitos. "That part of justice appears to me to be pious and holy which pertains to our care for the gods; and the other part of justice relates to our care for human beings."

"All care," says Sokrates, "is for the good and advantage of that which is taken care of. Is holiness an advantage to the gods; does it make their condition better?" This Euthyphron will not concede; but, being further questioned, defines holiness as care such as slaves take of their masters. Sokrates desires to know what beautiful work the gods perform by employing us as servants. "Such things preserve private households and the general weal of commonwealths," the theologist replies. Then, Sokrates remarks, holiness will be a kind of traffic between gods and men. "If it pleases you to call it so," the irritated priest answers. Sokrates insists on learning what advantage holiness or worship is to the gods; and enquires whether all the advantage is to mortals who receive everything from them, while they derive nothing from us.

Euthyphron indicates the use of worship to be

honor, reverence and gratitude to the gods. Aye, says Sokrates, "but not what is profitable or dear to them." "It is most dear to them," the mantis insists. If it is dear to them it must be pleasing to them, remarks his inexorable questioner. By this time, worried by the contradictions in which he has been involved, he breaks away; Sokrates hurling after him the declaration that he was depriving him of the hope to learn what things were holy and what were impious, so that he would be able to get rid of the indictment, and abstain from rash speech and innovation respecting divine things, and lead a better life.

But for men like Euthyphron, men like Sokrates would not have drank the hemlock. Perfect in the letter of the law, they are confused when required to exhibit the spirit which gives law its life.

In conclusion, the true worshipper will not be subject to the verbal teachings derived from the canons of established authorities. He will be aware that it is a matter of life and interior principle, and not a barter with Divinity of homage, rites, formal prayers and other paraphernalia in order to receive as an equivalent, worldly prosperity, and whatever the heart of man holds dear. "Take no thought for these; make no bargains with God for them," the true Philosophy teaches. They are always bestowed without asking, and the genuine man receives or goes without them, as may be his allotment. His recompense is in the doing, and becoming from what he does. "Pray that I may be as yourself," says Phaidros; "for all blessings are common."

## PLATO AND HIS WRITINGS.\*

Plato stands at the apex of the philosophic genus. The higher literature of the world is full of his thoughts. There are but few indeed who know not of the great Athenian, the pride of Hellas, and the intellectual glory of the human race.

In ancient times Plato was almost idolized. His fame was universal; his writings were widely circulated, deeply studied, and exercised a mighty influence; statues of him were erected in many places; and he and wisdom became practically synonymous terms. Nor was this admiration of the Academic Sage confined to the Pagans. Christian Fathers revered him, and quoted his writings in support of their doctrines. In fact it was claimed that Christianity hardly differed from Platonism in many of its dogmas. Some of the Fathers, as Clement of Alexandria, for instance, believed that Plato was actually inspired. Nor were these broad-minded Fathers wrong. The illustrious founder of the Academy was unquestionably a *divine light*.

The sublime spirit of Plato perhaps had its faults: living in the sphere of the imperfect it was naturally tinctured, though doubtless to a trifling degree, with imperfections. Most of the blemishes found in his character, however, existed *only* in the eyes of his

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critics. The ignorant and the depraved always defame those who are superior to them, and whose mode of living and thinking are therefore beyond their comprehension. It was charged that Plato was morose and unsocial. Doubtless there was no good reason in his age—nor is there in this—for a lover of truth to consort with the vulgar crowd. Plato's avoidance of the worthless and ignorant was naturally attributed to moroseness. Its true causes were not of course within the apprehension of his critics. These were a philosophic aversion to a glaring publicity, and an absolute devotion to the study and contemplation of supernal things. There were other idle and fictitious reports about him which are not even worth chronicling. All are self-refutatory.

In the fifteenth century when the sun of learning again arose, casting his enlightening beams on a darkened world, the name and writings of Plato were greeted with rapturous delight. The new Platonic Academy, founded by the celebrated Lorenzo De' Medici in 1474, became an instrumentality of great power. The founding of this academy is one of the most significant and important events in the history of intellectual progress. From this nursery of science and wisdom emanated an influence which permeated the civilized world. It overthrew the sterile scholasticism which had dominated mankind for centuries. It liberated the minds of men from the bondage of a degrading materialism. It worked for the spiritual advancement of men—it pointed out the way which leads from the dungeon of the senses to the pure highlands of the Ideal Region. Is it a wonder, then, considering the astonishing and beneficial effects produced by the study and dissemination of this Divine Philosophy, that the almost idolatrous honor accorded to Plato by the ancients was duplicated by his disciples of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries? Marsilius Ficinus, a true and most enthusiastic Platonist, kept a lamp ever burning in his study before an image of Plato; Lorenzo De' Medici was accustomed to say

that no man without a Platonic training could be either a good citizen or skilled in Christian doctrine; and Franciscus Patricius urged Pope Gregory XIV. to order that the Platonic Philosophy instead of the spurious Aristotelian, current at that time, be taught in all the colleges and monasteries under his control, and that he induce all sovereigns to issue a similar command.

From the fifteenth century to the present time, the Platonic Spirit has, to a greater or less extent, pervaded the literature of every nation. And yet, paradoxical as it may appear, the genuine students of Plato—those who read, understand and appreciate his immortal works—are, and always have been, but few. Few in any age—few indeed in this boasted nineteenth century. The reason is not far to seek. To read Plato intelligently requires the exercise of the highest faculties of the human intellect. The keenest minds must be ever on the alert if they would apprehend his thoughts. Themistios, a celebrated orator and thinker, relates that on one occasion Plato was lecturing in the Piræus (an Athenian suburb) to a large audience, composed of people from the city, the country, the vineyards, and even the mines. They listened to him with close attention until he began to discourse about the ONE TRUE GOOD and then their heads became confused, and they gradually melted away, leaving him alone with his friends. The average modern audience fades away as quickly as the ancient when a metaphysical question is discussed. And yet what question is of more interest to the genuine lover of truth than that of the One True Good—the supreme goal of man's efforts? The disgraceful fact is that the multitude cannot endure a discourse which forces them to *think*. They want to hear nothing which compells them to exert their reasoning powers in order to apprehend it. Intellectual indolence and moral degeneracy are the twin evils of the present day. There is not much hope for a generation that is content with Spencer as a Philosopher and



Howells as a novelist—that accepts the theory that all knowledge comes from and through the senses as Philosophy—may the gods pardon me for using the word in this connection!—and vapid commonplace chatter as something worthy of thoughtful consideration.

┐ The scope of Plato is all comprehensive. He is ancient, medieval, and modern. He was the type or idea of a true Philosopher, the spectator of all time and all existence, to use his own language. This is the reason why truth-seekers in all ages have drawn wisdom from the Platonic fount which is perennial.

┐ Plato will never become antiquated: he wrote for all time: he surveyed things from the standpoint of the universal, and therefore, as time rolls on, from his ever-vital pages will be brought by fitting interpreters instruction adapted to the wants and conditions of respective generations.

The thinking of this age is far behind that of Plato. The Sage of the Academy is distinctively in advance of the so-called philosophers of the nineteenth century. He views things from a higher plane. He probes deeper into the nature of truth. He knows human nature more profoundly. In brief, no phase of human thought escaped his all-comprehensive intuition.

Plato is not what is known as an "easy" author. He did not profess to make his thoughts plain to the "meanest capacities." Olympiodoros, a true follower of the Great Master, says that Plato, when nearing the time of his exit from this corporeal life, dreamed that he was changed into a swan which, by passing from tree to tree, caused much trouble and labor to the fowlers. According to the Sokratic Simmias this dream signified that Plato's meaning would be apprehended with difficulty by those who should desire to unfold it after his departure. For interpreters resemble fowlers in their endeavors to explain the conceptions of the ancients. But Plato's meaning cannot be apprehended without great trouble, because his writ-

ings, like those of Homer, must be considered physically, ethically, theologically, and, in brief, multifariously,—for these two souls are said to have been generated all-harmonic: and hence the writings of both Homer and Plato demand an all-various examination. The modern interpreters of Plato would do well to note and profit by Olympiodoros' explanation of the character of the Platonic writings—otherwise, their expositions will be superficial, and therefore of but little value.

Each Platonic dialogue is richer in its contents than ever were the famous diamond mines of Golconda—if it is right to compare the spiritual with the material. There are no trifling matters seriously discussed in the immortal writings of Plato. The highest subjects are investigated. The Platonic conceptions cannot be grasped by one reading—nay, nor by a hundred—unless the student is moved by an ardent philosophic enthusiasm, and an indefatigable determination to ascend to the citadel wherein dwells truth itself. No shallow mind need grapple with the Platonic writings, and try to understand them. They cannot be “done” in a few hours, nor can they be “got up,” or “read up,” for a public examination or occasion. The study of them can never become a “fad,” a mere fashionable pastime. The intellectual nobodies who busy themselves with making “fads” of certain authors are warned to leave the writings of the prince of philosophers alone.

In order to apprehend the interior meaning of these recondite writings one must rise above the thralldom of the senses—must use his *spiritual eye*, which, as it is said in the Republic, is better worth saving than ten thousand corporeal eyes. The reason is, that Plato deals chiefly with the ideal which, though it may seem strange, is in fact alone the real. He made, so to speak, extensive excursions into the supersensuous sphere and returned laden with ideas more wonderful than the Arabian Nights, and more valuable than all the treasures of all the Incas. The imperial

sweep of his intuitive vision carried him far in advance not only of his own age but of all others. We are yet far from the intellectual pinnacle from which he surveyed the mental kingdom, established its boundaries, mapped out its diverse regions, and sketched with an accurate and masterly hand the nature of its contents and products. It must not be forgotten that an idea is eternal in its essence. It is as true to-day as it was ages ago, and ages hence will not lack a scintilla of its verity. Ideas may be aptly compared to those sublime laws of right which, in the expressive language of Sophokles, "have the heavens for their birth-place, and God alone for their author— which the decays of mortal nature cannot vary, nor time cover with oblivion: for the Divinity is mighty within them, and waxes not old."

The inability of the multitude to energize without the aid of the senses—in other words, to apprehend the pure immaterial forms known as ideas—was amusingly illustrated on a certain occasion by Diogenes, "one of the ancient dogs who barked a great deal," according to Lucian. Plato was discoursing about ideas, and referred to *tableality* (*tableity*) and *cupeality* (*cupeity*). Diogenes exclaimed: "I see, O Plato, the table and the cup but not the *tableality* and *cupeality*. True, replied the Philosopher,—since you have eyes by which a table and a cup are seen, but not intuitive intellect by which *tableality* and *cupeality* are perceived." The Philosopher made a similar reply to Antisthenes, the head of the Cynic sect, who said that he could see a horse, but not the idea of a horse.

Plato requires that every student of Philosophy should possess certain qualifications, and it is only fair to assume that one who lacks these necessary qualifications will not make much progress in his attempts to grasp Platonic conceptions.

✓ Philosophy is a desire of Wisdom, or a release of the soul from the body and a conversion to those things which are true and perceived by intuitive intellect alone. Wisdom is the science of things divine

and human. The student of Philosophy must have a capacity for the apprehension of intellectual essences; a natural affection for truth and justice, and an aversion to falsehood; a mastery of the passions; and a contempt of corporeal pleasures. Moreover, the student must have a free, liberal mind,—for meanness or a love or doing of vile, trifling and worthless things is most antagonistic to a soul which intends to give itself to the contemplation of Truth. Lastly, he must have an acute apprehension and a good memory.

In the Fifth Book of the Republic is given a most admirable delineation of the respective characteristics of the lover of Wisdom and the lover of opinion—the true philosopher, and the bogus philosopher. It deserves the closest attention in an age which is so prolific of philosophasters and other intellectual frauds and shams as the present. I quote it in the excellent paraphrase (with a few alterations) of Archer Butler, a scholar who as a rule was a faithful and enthusiastic interpreter of Plato

—“Answer me, says Sokrates, when one says that a person loves anything, does one mean that he only loves such or such a part of it, or that he loves it in its totality? Certainly, in its totality. So of the Philosopher, he loves wisdom universally? Unquestionably. But just as a hungry man is not fastidious about peculiarities of diet, so we can scarcely call him a Philosopher who makes difficulties about peculiar sciences, . . . but he who manifests a taste for all kinds of knowledge, who joys in learning, and knows no satiety in the acquisition of truths, —think you, (continues Sokrates), does *he* not merit the name of Philosopher? Why, replies Glauco, at this rate the world would abound with Philosophers: for it appears to me that our lovers of brilliant shows are Philosophers as far as the pleasure of novel learning is concerned; and our lovers of the gratification of the ear very queer Philosophers, and who would not very willingly take part in such a discussion as ours; but who seem as if they had hired out their ears to all the choruses at the

feasts of Bacchus, missing not one in town or country. Are we to call such as these Philosophers, merely from their ardor for new information? Certainly not, replies the Master: these are not Philosophers, but imitations or counterfeits of Philosophers. But the true, who are they? *Those sight-lovers alone, who love the sight of Truth.* This calls for explanation, which Sokrates accordingly gives. You will grant me, the beautiful and the ugly are distinct. And if so each is *one*. It is the same with just and unjust, good and evil, and all other ideas: each in itself is *one*, but in their relations with actions and bodies they assume a thousand forms, that appear to multiply these primary unities. . . . Here then lies the true distinction between these sight-lovers, and art-lovers, and men of practical skill, and those to whom alone the name of Philosophers is fitly given. In what way, Sokrates? The former, curious of sight and sound, love beautiful voices, beautiful colors, beautiful forms, everything that is constructed out of such; but their intelligence cannot see and embrace the nature of the beautiful itself. . . . Are not such men rare indeed, who can advance to this beautiful itself, and see it in its essence? . . . And what is the life of a man who believes in beautiful things, but is a stranger to the beautiful itself, and is powerless to follow those who would show it to him? Is it a dream or a reality? What *is* to dream? Is it not—sleeping or waking, I care not—to take the resemblance of a thing for the thing it resembles? Surely it is. What then? He who can contemplate the beautiful, whether in itself or in that which participates of its essence, without ever confounding the object partaking with the essence partaken, seems *his* life a dream or a reality? Doubtless, a thorough reality." Sokrates then establishes the distinction between knowledge and opinion. "If science refer to being, and ignorance to non-being,—we must seek for that which is a medium between existence and non-existence, something intermediate between science and ignorance. This is no other than opinion, a faculty distinct from

science. Opinion cannot rise to know what science knows, nor science descend to estimate as opinion estimates. The latter, less luminous than science, less obscure than ignorance, finds its object in that which, holding the mean between pure being and pure nothing, *at once is and is not*. This object, itself subject to perpetual variation, contrasts with the world of science, which is ever one and identical; and the sight-lover, untaught to repose in the absolute beauty, is condemned to hover in a region of incessant and unsatisfying change.—That which in one point of view presents itself as beautiful and just, in another point of view shall lose these high characteristics; and it is the same with every attribute that can affect the objects of the sensuous world. Sokrates then proceeds triumphantly to the close. We have discovered, he pronounces, that this multitude of things to which a multitude of persons ascribe Beauty and the like, hovers between the absolute reality and total negation. Agreed. But we had previously settled that of such things as these we would properly affirm that they are the object of the intermediate faculty, of opinion and not of science. Certainly. As for those who, gazing on things beautiful, perceive not the Absolute Beauty, and are unable to follow him who would lead them thither; who observe many just things, but never Justice itself, and so of the rest,—all their judgments we shall say are opinions not knowledge. Certainly. On the contrary, those who contemplate the immutable essences of things possess not opinions but knowledge. Equally certain. Shall we not say then of both, that they have attachment and love,—the one for those things which are the objects of knowledge, the other party for those which are the subjects of opinion? Have we not said that these last are gratified with beautiful things, sounds, colors, and so forth, but that they will not hear of the Absolute Beauty as something which is a reality? So we said. Thus we shall do them no wrong if we call them *philodoxoi* rather than *philosophoi*—the aspirants

after opinion not after wisdom. . . . Be those then alone deemed Philosophers who in each object seize the essential reality."

In conclusion I may add that one of the chief things which endears Plato to the seekers after truth is, that he perpetually aspires. He advises all to persevere in the road which leads upward to the Celestial Heights—heights which he himself not only attained but even passed beyond, according to some of his enthusiastic disciples.

THOS. M. JOHNSON.



## PLATONIC CELEBRATION.

We note with great pleasure that the holding of an annual Symposium or festival in celebration of the "birthday" (mundane descent) of the Divine Plato, revived by the Editor of this journal in 1888, will probably become a permanent custom. We hope to see the time when the birthday of Plato will not only be made a national holiday, but will also be celebrated throughout the civilized world by Platonists and all others who love Wisdom, and worship in the temple of Truth.

We are indebted to Mrs. Julia P. Stevens for the following report of the Symposium held at Bloomington, Ills., under the auspices of the Plato Club of that



city. In justice to Mrs. Stevens it should be said that much of the success of this celebration is due to her indefatigable work and enthusiasm.

In imitation of the nine Muses, nine persons are accustomed to assemble at stated times for the purpose of making a study of the works of Plato. Their names are:

|                        |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Miss Sarah E. Raymond, | Miss Nellie Fitzgerald, |
| Miss Effie Henderson,  | Miss Clara Ewing,       |
| Dr. E. W. Gray,        | Prof. A. S. McCoy,      |
| Mrs. Mary A. Marmon,   | Mrs. Emelie S. Maddox.  |
| Mrs. Julia P. Stevens. |                         |

This Club gave a Festival on November the 7th in commemoration of the Terrestrial Descent of Plato.

They met in a Symposium, with about fifty guests, among whom were the most cultivated people in the city. Three daily newspapers kindly lent their aid in presenting to the public the object of the meeting, viz. to attempt to awaken an interest in the Platonic Philosophy.

Music of a very high order was rendered by resident musicians, Prof. Benter, Miss Carrie Crane, Mrs. Eva Mayers Shirley, Mrs. Lydia Sherman.

Miss Raymond welcomed with cordial greeting, not only the Philosophers who appeared in response to the invitation, but those from suburban towns, distant cities, and our own home friends.

She gave likewise a short sketch of the Life of Plato. Mrs. Stevens stated briefly the reasons for fixing the Celebration on the 7th of November, rather than in May, November corresponding to Thargelion the eleven month of the Attic year, and the time observed by the Florentine Platonists.

Several letters expressive of sympathy and an appreciation of the movement were read from friends deprived of the pleasure of attendance. One says: "Your invitation is both beautiful and original. I like

the idea of celebrating Plato's birthday in Illinois."

"The Central Christian Advocate," in a friendly notice of the Symposium, has this: "Some one has said that if he were *not* a Christian, he would be a Platonist; but some wiser ones are both Christians and Platonists, and delight to study his philosophy, and honor his memory."

The following letter from the eminent Dr. Wilkinson, of London, England, is so beautiful and suggestive that I cannot forbear giving it entire. In reply to my solicitation for an article for the occasion, he says:

"I am only acquainted with Plato in meager fashion, having read *in him*, but *not* read *him*; and my intercourse with his great faculties has been through English. So, it is not for me to write about him. It appears to me that a *spiritual ascent* of Plato will also take place

All the old Philosophers, whether holding of Idealism or Materialism, are about to be summoned from the ceremonies of mere learning—thanks to learning for its linen-clothes, that have kept the dead for a new edition, to stand at the manger of a new Christianity, ministering to its little children. Plato will be there with his greater Socrates. But antiquity itself will come; is fast approaching, carrying its *Arcana*, no longer secret. Before the twentieth century is old, such an august assembly of the ages will testify to the Lord of the Ages, coming again with the Offerings of their gold from the East. Your earnest words in the West are heard by them, and will hasten them to your stars.

Yours faithfully,

J. J. GARTH WILKINSON.

Rev. George Stevens read a paper by Alexander Wilder M. D., of New York City, entitled, "Philosophic Morality." Then an anonymous essay was presented, on "Euthyphron or Holiness."

Both these papers provoked discussion. Many insisted upon concisely formulated definitions of the two qualities, morality and holiness; and some murmured at not having them shaped into jewels, to be borne away as keepsakes.

Mrs. South, of Jacksonville, Ills., recited a little poem, "Looking Backward," contrasting the socialistic scheme of Edward Bellamy, with Plato's Republic.

At the evening session, although the rain fell in torrents, there were about sixty souls present. The session opened with the following poetical tribute to Plato, which was read by Mrs. Julia P. Stevens:

## I.

"Immortal Plato ! Justly named divine !  
 What depth of thought, what energy is thine !  
 Whose God-like soul, an ample mirror seems,  
 Strongly reflecting mind's celestial beams,  
 Whose periods too redundant roll along,  
 Grand as the ocean ! as the torrent strong."

\* \* \* \* \*  
*A few are always found in every age.*  
*"To unfold the wisdom of thy mystic page."*

## II.

And now, though hoary centuries have fled,  
*We* wish to honor *still*, the illustrious dead,  
 Dead ! Did I say ? Ah no ! He yet inspires  
 All lofty souls, with heavenly desires  
 To mount on Reason's wing, beyond the sky,  
 Where truly beauteous forms can *never* die,  
 Where prophet, saint, and sage in bright array,  
 Behold the splendors of eternal day.

## III.

Moses, Gautama, and Aristo's Son,  
 And *all* who conqueror's crowns on earth have won,  
 With Him, who hath redeemed *us*, meet in love,  
 In that mysterious mansion built above  
 Not framed with *hands*, far o'er the starry plains,  
 Within that crystal city, where justice ever reigns,  
 Where spotless souls in glistening raiment shine,  
 Flooding the golden streets with light divine.

## IV.

The marriage supper of the Lamb is spread,  
 "The Bridegroom cometh:" yea the bride to wed !  
 The sumptuous Banquet's crimson bowls are set,  
 Reason and Love have in true union met,  
 And Wisdom *first-born*, *older* than the sun.  
 Since Time began his royal course to run,  
 Has poured her sacred light into the mind,  
 In streams of Truth, to save and bless mankind.

Mr. Johnson, Editor of the BIBLIOTHECA PLATONICA, read a paper entitled, "Plato and His Writings." Much interest was manifested by various questions, at the conclusion of the reading.

Dr. Hiram K. Jones, of Jacksonville, Illinois, who declared that *his* "lucid interval" was in the morning, rather than in the evening, delivered a most eloquent extemporaneous discourse on the "Symposion of Plato." Dr. Jones began by saying that it was very significant that such a meeting should be held in the presence of such a company, assembled in the interest of the higher thought; that Mr. Emerson had asserted that *Plato* had never been *read* by ten persons

in any generation; that Plato is *not* discoursing on the trifling and mutable, but of the eternal principles, of which these varying, changing things, are but the image; that Paul also says that the things which are *seen* are temporal, but the things which are *not* seen are eternal; that Plato was not the Light of the world; he was a witness of that Light. The Doctor continued: And now we are gathered here to celebrate in a Symposium, his descent into these terrestrial planes, and I am invited to speak more particularly on his Banquet; which some suppose to be a mere feast in connection with drunken debaucheries, or a senseless carousal. But it is the feast of life; and the persons present are representative of principles or ideas.

The feast is at the house of Agatho or the Good. Agatho means the good of life, near whom Socrates—or Wisdom—is reclining. Philosophy is *philosophia*, or the union of love and wisdom. True happiness is not the fruit of abstract speculation, but of the union of love and wisdom. The affections joined to intelligence are prolific of joy unspeakable.

There is love terrestrial and love celestial; and each one at the Banquet gives his definition according to his own realization of it. After what fashion shall we best drink? enquires Pausanias. There can be no royal feast without Pausanias or Temperance; and they are all agreed not to make this banquet a debauch, as on a former occasion; and first of all send away the flute-playing damsel, for bodily pleasure, which she represents, is not allowed to remain at the feast of life. There is no room for angel visitants, where the siren Pleasure dwells. *She* obscures the vision and blinds the judgment, and pleasure and pain are not to be considered; we must accept either flowery beds, or crowns of thorns.

Phaedrus is the Beautiful; and, as being nearest to love, is invited to speak first. Love and the beautiful are to be perceived by the soul itself, but the beautiful may aid in the manifestation and apprehen-

sion of love. Love and beauty are divine ideas, and are fountained in God.

Beauty is the sky-light through which love is admitted to the soul.

So we see that at the feast of life Agatho—the Good of life, at whose home the Banquet is held,—Pausanias, Temperance, Phaedrus, Beauty, must all be present. Eryximachus is there, too; his name signifying health-giving, or love of health,—he is the physician or healer. He commends Pausanias for having distinguished love into two kinds, and says that love exists not only in the soul of man for beautiful persons, but in other beings likewise, and all existing things; and that from the standpoint of his own healing art he sees how great and wonderfully love extends its sway over all, as regards things human and divine. The love in a healthy body is of one kind; the love in a diseased body is another. So we must have healthy souls in order that that which is divine may readily flow in, for whatever may be the influx the depraved soul will soon convert all to its own base use.

The soul itself is the fountain of good and evil, and it will be no better, on escaping from *this* body, if it be filled with impurities and disease. The human body is perpetually formed *in* the soul, as is expressed by Edmund Spenser in his poem of "Beauty":

"For of the *soul* the *body* form doth take,  
For soul is *form* and doth the body make."

We must have the great Physician, Christ, the healer, to make us whole, who heals all who become partakers of His righteousness.

Aristophanes must also be at the Banquet. He signifies appearance. A good appearance, good manners, is a necessity in every relation in life; but Aristophanes represents the element of seeming, many merely seem to be good and beautiful, and dwell in a world of affectation and conventionality and, leading an artificial life, struggle to *seem* what they are not. Such only realize momentary joy or sorrow.

Love is the youngest of the gods. Divine love makes the soul forever young. If divine love is in the soul we shall every day be renewed in His image. Love is the living fountain of youth. If we truly have love we shall never grow old. God is love. He is always the same, and is always flowing down into and re-creating us. But He never intrudes upon those whose doors are closed against Him. Love in the Banquet is represented as lying on the door-steps. "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and will open the door I will come in and sup with him and he with me." Man no more *redeems* himself than he *makes* himself.

Apollodorus is at the feast. He is one gifted of Apollo. Apollo is the art-god, and the gifted of the art-god is a lover of art, and without the love of art the man is seriously defective in the elements of his character.

We must cultivate a love of poesy, and painting, and music, and statuary, and architecture as an education of the tastes and judgment. This is the connecting link between the sensible and the ideal. And he that is truly conversant with art is beholding ideas.

Alcibiades is pride, love of self, or self respect. He says he prides himself on his beauty marvelously.

Socrates is Plato's regenerate man. After this statement Dr. Jones read from Plato's Symposium, blending his own discourse with that of the author in utterances which appeared equally stately; and the uninitiated found difficulty in determining which was Dr. Jones and which Plato.

"I say then," says Alcibiades, "that Socrates is most like the figures of Silenus that are seated in the workshops of statuaries, which the artists have made, holding reeds or flutes; but which, when they are opened down the middle, appear to contain within them statues of the gods. And I again say he resembles the satyr Marsyas. Said he to Socrates: Are you not also a piper much more wonderful than Marsyas? For he

charmed men through instruments, by a power proceeding from the mouth; and he charms even now, when any one plays his melodies. Now his melodies, whether man or woman, a good or a bad flute player, plays them, cause a person to be spell-bound, and point, out through their being divine, those that stand in need of the gods, and the mysteries; but *you* in this respect alone differ from *him*, that *you* effect the very same thing by *naked words* without instruments.

We therefore when we hear another person, although a good speaker, pronouncing the speeches of others, not a single hearer, so to say, pays any regard to them; but when any one hears *you*, or your discourses spoken by another, although he is a wretched speaker, yet, whether a woman or a man or a lad is the auditor, we are astonished and spell-bound. And, continues Alcibiades, when I hear him my heart leaps much more than that of the *Corybantes*; and my tears flow forth through his discourses. I see, too, many others suffering in the very same way.....

By violence therefore restraining myself as to my ears, I depart from him, flying as it were from the sirens, lest I should sit there by him until I grew old."

"I know not whether any one of you has seen the images within; but I once saw them, and they appeared to me to be so divine and golden, and all-beautiful and wonderful that I thought I must in a short time do whatever Socrates ordained." Socrates then commends Alcibiades for striving to obtain the truth of beautiful things instead of the reputation, and says "you conceive that you will in reality exchange brass for gold."

It is almost impossible to represent Dr. Jones fairly; like Socrates, his discourses make our eyes stream with tears, hold us spell-bound and make us feel like crying, "what shall we do?" while the sublimity and grandeur of his expressions and the steady sweep of his thought are like the solemn roar of the ocean. My enthusiasm has induced me to attempt to faithfully portray the manner and style of



this masterly teacher of Plato. How poorly I have succeeded will of course appear to those who have themselves heard his lofty discourse. The audience after joining in the song, "Auld Lang Syne," dispersed.

The next day, November 8th, was almost entirely occupied in conversations and discussions on Platonic topics; and I hold in grateful remembrance all the good things uttered both by Mr. Johnson and Dr. Jones.

The success of the Symposium was mainly due to the energy of Miss Raymond, who, gifted with appreciation, is the embodiment of generosity, and ever seeks to bring the very best of everything to the citizens of Bloomington.

*The next Celebration will be held on the 7th day of November, 1890, at Jacksonville, Ills.*



## ECSTASY.\*

BY TH. RIBOT.

The fixed idea, which we have discussed in a preceding number, might be termed the chronic form of hypertrophy of attention; ecstasy being its acute form. It is not our purpose here to investigate exhaustively

\*Reprinted, with a few omissions, from our enterprising contemporary, *THE OPEN COURT*. The paper is interesting and valuable to a certain extent, but M. Ribot's views on this important subject certainly require correction. We have added Notes which will, we apprehend, elucidate some essential points.

this extraordinary state of mind. We have treated it elsewhere,\* in its negative aspect, as annihilation of will. At present we are to consider it from its positive side, as exaltation of intellect!

The comparison of attention and ecstasy is not novel; the analogy between the two states being so great that various authors have actually employed attention to define ecstasy. "It is," says Berard, "a vivid exaltation of certain ideas, which so absorb attention, that sensations are suspended, voluntary motions arrested, and vital action itself frequently slackened."<sup>2</sup> Michea defines it as "a deep contemplation with abolition of sensibility and suspension of the locomotive faculty." A. Maury expresses himself even more explicitly, saying: "A simple difference of degree separates ecstasy from the action of forcibly fixing an idea in the mind. Contemplation implies exercise of will, and the power of interrupting the extreme tension of the mind. In ecstasy, which is contemplation carried to its highest pitch, the will, although in the strictest sense able to provoke the state, is nevertheless unable to suspend it."<sup>†</sup>

As in the fixed idea, so between the normal state and ecstasy, intermediate degrees are distinguishable. Men endowed with great power of attention, can isolate themselves at will from the external world. Inaccessible to sensations, and even to pain, they temporarily live in that particular state which has been called *contemplation*. The oft-quoted story of Archimedes at the capture of Syracuse, whether true or not as fact, is certainly psychologically true. The biographies of Newton, Pascal, Walter Scott, Gauss, and many others, have furnished numerous examples of this intellectual rapture.

"Before the invention of chloroform, patients would sometimes endure painful operations without betraying any symptom of pain, and afterwards would declare that they had felt nothing, having by a pow-

\**Les Maladies de la volonté*, Chap. V.

†Maury, *Le Sommeil et les Rêves*, p. 235.

erful effort of attention concentrated their thoughts upon some subject, by which they had been completely entranced.

"Many martyrs have endured torture with perfect serenity, which, according to their own confession, they experienced no difficulty in maintaining up to the last. Their entranced attention was to such a degree absorbed by the beatific visions that were presented to their enraptured eyes that bodily tortures did not give them any pain."\*

Political fanaticism has more than once produced the same effects. But everywhere and always some great passion has served as the basis of support; still further proving, that vivid and stable forms of attention depend on emotional life and on that only.

Passing by the intermediate degrees, in order to come to ecstasy proper, and neglecting all the other physical and psychical manifestations that accompany this extraordinary state, let us consider exclusively a single fact, namely, extreme intellectual activity accompanied by intense concentration upon a single idea. This is a state of intense and circumscribed ideation; all life is gathered up, as it were, in the thinking brain, in which a single representation absorbs everything else. Still, the state of ecstasy, although in every individual it may exalt the intelligence to its highest degree of power, is nevertheless unable to transform it. It cannot act in the same manner upon a narrow and ignorant mind as upon a broad and highly cultivated one. From the viewpoint of our present subject we may, accordingly, distinguish two categories of mystics. With the first class the internal event consists of the apparition of some dominant *image*, around which all else revolves. . . . In the second category—the grand mystics—the mind, after having traversed the region of images, reaches the domain of pure *ideas*, and there remains fixed. Further on, I shall attempt to show that this higher form of ecstasy may at times reach the state of

\*Carpenter, "Mental Physiology," Chap. III.

complete, absolute monoideism, that is, the state of perfect unity of consciousness, which consists in a single state without any change whatever.

In order to trace this ascending progression toward absolute unity of consciousness, of which even the most concentrated attention is but a very faint outline, we need not have recourse to probable hypotheses, nor need we proceed theoretically and a priori. I find in the "*Castillo interior*" of Saint Theresa a description, step by step, of this progressive concentration of consciousness, which, starting from the ordinary state of diffusion, assumes the form of attention, passes beyond the latter, and by degrees, in a few rare cases, attains to perfect unity of intuition. The illustration in question is exceptional and single, but in the present matter one good observation is better than a hundred second-rate ones.\* The observation deserves, moreover, our fullest confidence. It is a confession made at the behest of the spiritual power, the work of a very delicate mind, and a very able observer that well knew how to wield language to express the finest shades of thought. . . . This task I shall now attempt, endeavoring at the same time to point out the ever increasing concentration and incessant narrowing of consciousness that we have noted, as they are described from her own personal experience.

There exists, says she, a castle built of a solitary diamond of matchless beauty and incomparable purity; to enter and to dwell in that castle is the supreme aim of the mystic. This castle is within us, within our soul; we have not to step out of ourselves, to penetrate its recesses; though, nevertheless, the road thereto is long and difficult. To reach it we have to pass through seven stations; we enter the castle through the seven degrees of "prayer." In the preparatory stage we are still immersed in bewildering varieties of

\*It is highly probable that one could find more of the same kind, by examining the mystic literature of different countries. The passages here quoted are from the "*Interior Castle*," and a few from the "*Autobiography*."

impressions and images—occupied with “the life of the world;” or as I should prefer to translate it, consciousness still follows its usual and normal course.

The first objective point, or stage, is reached through “oral prayer.” Which, interpreted, means, that praying aloud, articulate speech in other words, produces the first degree of concentration, leading the dispersed consciousness into a single, confined channel.

The second stage is that of “mental prayer,” which means that the inwardness of thought increases; internal language is substituted for external language. The work of concentration becomes easier: consciousness, to prevent aberration, no longer requires the material support of articulate or audible words; consciousness is now satisfied with a series of uncertain images unfolding before it.

The “prayer of recollection” (*oraison de recueillement*) marks the third stage. What this means, I must confess, slightly puzzles me. In this state I can only perceive a still higher form of the second period, separated from it by a very subtle shade, and appreciable only to the mystic consciousness.

Up to this point there has been activity, movement, and effort. All our faculties are still in play; now, however, it becomes necessary “no longer to think much, but to love much.” In other words, consciousness is about to pass from the discursive form to the intuitive form, from plurality to unity; it tends no longer toward being a radiation around a fixed point, but a single state of enormous intensity. And this transition is not the effect of a capricious, arbitrary will, nor of the mere movement of thought left to itself; it needs the impulsion of a powerful love, the “touch of divine grace,” that is, the unconscious co-operation of the whole being.

The “prayer of quietude” brings us to the fourth station; there “the soul no longer produces, but receives;” this is a state of high contemplation, not exclusively known to religious mystics alone. It is truth

appearing suddenly in its totality, imposing itself as such, without the long, slow process of logical demonstration.

The fifth station, or "prayer of union," is the beginning of ecstasy; but it is unstable. It is "the meeting with the divine betrothed," but without lasting possession. "The flowers have but half-opened their calyxes, they have only shed their first perfumes." The fixity of consciousness is not as yet complete, it is still liable to oscillations and deviations; as yet it is unable to maintain itself in this extraordinary, unnatural state.

Finally it attains to ecstasy in the sixth degree, through "the prayer of rapture." The body grows cold; speech and respiration are suspended, the eyes close; the slightest motion may cause the greatest efforts.... The senses and faculties remain without. .... Although usually one does not lose all feeling (consciousness), still *"it has happened to me to be entirely deprived of it; this has seldom come to pass, and has lasted but for a short time. Most frequently, feeling is preserved, but one experiences an indefinite sort of agitation, and although one ceases to act outwardly, one does not fail to hear. It is like some confused sound, coming from afar. Still, even this manner of hearing ceases when the entrancement is at its highest point."*

What, then, is the seventh and last station that is reached by "the flight of the spirit?" What is there beyond ecstasy? Union with God.<sup>3</sup> This is accomplished "suddenly and violently....but with such force that we should strive in vain to resist the impetuous onset." God has now descended into the substance of the soul, and becomes one with it. This distinction of the two degrees of ecstasy is not, in my opinion, without reason. At its highest degree, the very abolition of consciousness is attained by its excess of unity! This interpretation will appear well-grounded, upon reference to the two passages above italicized, viz. "It has happened to me to be entirely

deprived of feeling," and "this manner of hearing ceases when the entrancement is at its highest point." We might cite other passages to this effect from the same author. It is remarkable, that in one of her "great raptures" the Divinity appeared to her entirely without form, as a perfectly empty abstraction. Such, at least, appears to be the gist of her own words: "And so I say, that the Divinity is like a transparent diamond, supremely limpid, and much larger than the world"\* In this I can discern nothing else than a simple rhetorical comparison, a literary metaphor. It is, indeed, the expression of complete unity of intuition.

This piece of psychological evidence has enabled us, as we have seen, to follow consciousness, step by step, to its furthestmost degree of concentration, to *absolute* monoidism. It enables us, moreover, to answer a question, frequently raised, yet which has only theoretically been settled; namely, Can a state of uniform consciousness subsist? The testimony of certain mystics apparently justifies an answer in the affirmative. To be sure, it is a settled and common truism, that consciousness only exists through change; at least it has been admitted since the time of Hobbes: "*Idem sentire semper, et non sentire, ad idem recidunt.*" But this law has been infringed in the case of a few exceptional individuals, in very rare instances, and during very short spaces of time. In ordinary ecstasy consciousness attains to its maximum of constriction and intensity, but it still preserves the discursive form: it differs only in degree from very strong attention. The greatest mystics alone have attained, by a still stronger effort, to absolute monoidism. They all, in every country, in all times, and without knowledge of each other, have regarded perfect unity of consciousness, the *ἐνωσις*, as the supreme and rarely attained consummation of ecstasy. Only four times in his life did Plotinus obtain this favor, according to Porphyrius, who himself obtained it but once, at the age of

\*Autobiography, p. 526.



sixty-six years.\* Consciousness, at this extreme point, cannot long endure—they declare. But this instability, which they explain in their own way as due to their unworthiness of such beatitude and the impossibility of a finite mortal becoming infinite, is in reality explainable from psychological and physiological causes. Consciousness is placed without its necessary conditions of existence, and the nervous elements that are the supports and agents of this prodigious activity cannot long bear the intense strain. The individual then falls back to earth again, and again becomes “the little donkey a-browsing away his mortal existence.”

\*Porphyrius, “Life of Plotinus,” Chap. XII.

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#### NOTES.

<sup>1</sup>Ecstasy is, as the word implies, a state in which the soul is out of the body and temporarily emancipated from all corporeal and material conditions and entanglements. It is primarily a product of the will, and therefore cannot be rightly termed “annihilation of the will.” Iamblichos, a most competent authority, accurately says: “It is necessary to distinguish two forms or species of ecstasy: one of these leads to an inferior or worse condition, and fills us with ignorance and folly—the other imparts goods which are superior to human wisdom. One species falls or tends to a disorderly, confused or material motion (action)—the other gives itself to the Cause which governs the mundane order. One, since it lacks knowledge, wanders from wisdom—the other conjoins us with those things which surpass all our wisdom. The one is changeable—the other is immutable. The one is contrary to the natural condition, and the other is superior to it. The one draws down the soul, but the other elevates it. The one entirely separates us from a divine allotment or condition, but the other raises and unites us to it.”†

† *De Mysteriis*, III. 25.

<sup>2</sup>Ecstasy is *not* a "vivid exaltation of certain ideas" but an elevation or transport of the rational soul itself from the sensuous to the supersensuous sphere.

<sup>3</sup>Union with the First or Supreme Principle is the final goal of the soul's ecstatic ascent or journey. It is necessary to note, since there is a common and gross ignorance as to the point, that this mystic union—at least from the true or Platonic stand-point—does not produce or result in a loss of the soul's individuality. This union is, however, of the most intimate character, and there is during its continuance an absence of every perception of alienation. There is an at-one-ment which is in its effects equivalent to the temporary cessation of the consciousness of duality. Plotinos (En. VI. lib. 9) gives an accurate, vivid, and sublime description of this most exalted state.

<sup>4</sup>There is no 'abolition of consciousness' in the pure ecstatic condition. On the contrary, there is a development and expansion of consciousness to the highest possible degree. There is an essential difference between consciousness and feeling. Feeling should only be used in connection with the physical or sensuous. In meaning it is equivalent to sensation. Consciousness is not naturally related to, or connected with, the physical or material in any respect whatever.



## THE PLATONIC THEORY OF EDUCATION.\*

The celebrated Rousseau said that the Republic of Plato is the finest treatise on education ever written. This is unquestionably true, and yet to the average teacher and doctor of pedagogy of the present day the conceptions of Plato on the important subject of Education will doubtless appear unfamiliar, imperfect, and impracticable. Some would probably say, or at least think, after an examination of them, that they are even wild and incapable of realization.

There is a wide and essential difference between the Platonic and modern educational theories and aims. The object of modern education is essentially utilitarian and practical. It proceeds upon the theory that the chief if not sole object of one's life is to make a living—to acquire not only all the necessities and conveniences, but, if possible, the luxuries of the sensuous life—to accumulate wealth—to gain social and political position and honors,—and that therefore the education of the youth of both sexes should be of the kind best calculated to enable one to obtain these desirable things.

The Platonic theory considers an utilitarian education as a thing which is by and of itself unworthy

\*Read before the Southwest Missouri Teachers' Association, Dec. 27th, 1889. This paper correctly outlines, we believe, the general principles of the Platonic theory of Education. No attempt is made to enter into details.

of acquisition. It ranks this species of training lowest in the educational scale. An education the sole object of which is to obtain the sensuous necessities and conveniences is not only grossly incomplete, but tends directly to the degradation and corruption of the soul. No branch of learning is really worthy of cultivation that is not valuable for its own sake, irrespective of its practical application or utilization.

According to the Platonic conception of human life and duty the main object of life is not the making of what is known as a "living." Much less is it the accumulation of wealth—the acquisition of social and political honors—and the gratification of the multifarious and almost innumerable demands of the senses. None of these contribute to the true well-being of the soul but, on the contrary, are antagonistic to it. The chief aim of man's endeavors should be the culture of the intellectual, immortal principle—the removal from it of every earthly passion and vice, and, above all, the contemplation of Truth. The soul has within itself the germs and principles of all knowledge, and the function of education is not the putting of knowledge into the soul—you might as well attempt to put sight into the eye—but the drawing out or development of its innate ideas. The primary object of education is therefore the development of moral and intellectual (spiritual) character.

The chief instruments used in the Platonic scheme of education are two: 1st, Mathematics; 2d, Dialectic. Mathematical studies should be pursued with a definite purpose in view, viz. the disciplining of the mind or, in other words, the formation of a moral and intellectual character. The Platonists never studied, or taught, mathematics from the utilitarian point of view. Proklos, an ancient mathematician and philosopher of great celebrity, says that the "end of geometry, and indeed of mathematics in general, is to be referred to the energies of intellect, and that it is degraded when made subservient to the common utilities of a mere animal life." Archimedes, probably the

most illustrious of all mathematicians and inventors, ancient or modern, held similar views with reference to the object of mathematical studies. True, he invented wonderful engines for the defense of Syracuse, his native place,—but, Plutarch informs us, that he did not think the inventing of them an object worthy of his serious pursuits, but only reckoned them among the amusements of Geometry. The Geometrical science, if rightly studied, serves as a bridge whereby the intellect may pass from the sensuous to the supersensuous—from the phenomenal to the real. There are no perfect lines, circles, etc., in either nature or art. They exist alone in the ideal region. The natural and artificial circles, lines, etc., are but images—mere reflections of the *true*.

It is truly declared in the *Republic* "that the eye of the soul which is blinded and buried by other studies is alone naturally adapted to be resuscitated and excited by the mathematical disciplines." And again, "that the soul is led by these to the vision of true being, and from images to realities, and is transferred from obscurity to intellectual light,—and, in brief, is elevated from the caverns of a sensuous life and the bonds of matter to an incorporeal essence."

What is known as a "practical education" was not entirely ignored by Plato, but it was of little value in his estimation. Nor did he think that the study of elementary branches of learning should be made compulsory, for he says in the *Republic* that "the acquisition of knowledge ought not to be made a slavery to any free man."

The second educational instrument in the Platonic scheme is *Dialectic*, which may be defined, in the language of Dr. Cocker, as "the science of eternal and immutable principles, and the method by which these first principles are brought forward into the clear light of consciousness." In other words, it is a passing from seeming to being—from the temporary to the eternal—the world of ideas or reality. In modern times this dialectical method has been termed

transcendental logic. Plato believed in the existence of eternal and absolute ideas, and the final aim of his Dialectic was to ascend from the ideal region, the abode of absolute Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, to the Absolute Being in whom all absolute ideas are united, and from whom all proceed. In the *Republic* it is said: "He who possesses the true love of science is naturally carried in his aspirations to the *real being*; and his love, so far from suffering itself to be retarded by the multitude of things whose reality is only apparent, knows no repose until it has arrived at union with the essence of each object, by the part of the soul which is akin to the permanent and essential,—so that this divine conjunction having produced intelligence and truth, the knowledge of being is won."

The path travelled by the Dialectical Process is outlined in a striking passage in the sixth book of the same masterly work: "The dialectic faculty proceeds from hypothesis to an unhypothetical principle . . . it uses hypotheses as steps, and starting points, in order to proceed from thence to the *Absolute*. The intuitive reason takes hold of the first principle of the universe, and avails itself of all the connections and relations of that principle. It ascends from idea to idea, until it has reached the supreme idea."

The famous allegory with which the seventh book of the *Republic* opens admirably and vividly pictures the miserable condition of the unenlightened soul, incarcerated in the den of matter and sense, and the felicity of the soul which escapes from its prison and ascends to the uplands of the true or ideal region.

"Now," Socrates says, "compare our natural condition, so far as education and ignorance are concerned, to a state of things like the following: Imagine a subterranean cave-like dwelling, having its whole length open to the light; and in this cave men confined from their infancy by fetters which so bind their limbs and necks that they can neither change their places nor turn their heads round, and can behold only what fronts them. The light comes to them from

a fire which is kindled at some distance and pretty high behind them. Between this fire and our captives rises a low wall like those screens that jugglers draw between themselves and the spectators, and above which their wonders are exhibited. Now conceive that there pass along this wall men carrying objects of all kinds, which appear above the screen, figures of men and animals in wood and stone, and other varieties, some of the bearers, as we may suppose, speaking, others silent. A strange similitude, Socrates! and strange creatures these. This nevertheless is our own condition. In the first place, do you suppose they will see, of themselves and of those at their sides, any thing but the shadows traced by the firelight on the opposite side of their cavern? Certainly not, since you suppose them unable to turn their heads round. And of the objects which we have represented as borne along behind their backs, shall they see but the shadows? Unquestionably. Now if these poor prisoners could converse together, do you not think that they would believe the shadows they saw passing to be the real things themselves? And if the prison had an echo, whenever any passer-by spoke, would they not conceive that they heard the shadow itself speak, which alone they saw? In brief, would they not attribute a perfect reality to the shadows? . . . Now let us suppose them released from their chains and ignorance, and what would be the result? Take one of these captives, force him suddenly to rise, to turn round his head, to walk forth, and face the light—he will never be able to do this without pain, and the dazzling splendor will prevent him from even seeing the objects with whose shadows he was before so familiar. What would he say, if some friend told him that until then he gazed but on phantoms, that at length nearer to reality he saw more justly, and showing him each object as it passed should oblige him by force of questioning to say what it was—do you not think he would feel utterly perplexed, and even think his old shadows more real than



the objects which he now beheld? . . . . Let him look at the fire! His eyes are pained, and he recurs to those shadows which gave him no trouble. He thinks them far more truly visible than all he is now taught to gaze upon! . . . . But once more, suppose him snatched from his cavern in spite of all his efforts, dragged by a path-way steep and rugged to some eminence from which he is to behold the full lustre of the sun,—will he not complain bitterly at this as cruel violence? And when he does come into the blaze of noon-day, shall his eyes, filled with the splendor, be able to see any one of the objects which we call real? No, surely; not at first. It is not without long use that those feeble eyes can get familiar with that upper sphere. First he will easiest perceive shadows, then images in the water, and at last objects themselves. Thence he will direct his eyes to the heavens which he will be able better to bear during moonlight and starlight than while the sun appears. . . . But at length he will have the power not merely to see the image of the sun in the waters or elsewhere, but to see it where and as it is! . . . .

Then shall he learn that that sun was the cause of all he had beheld in his cavern. . . . and when he thinks of what he and his fellows in captivity thought once was wisdom, will he not deplore their misery, and rejoice in his own emancipation? And if in that cavern world there were honors and public prizes for the most successful analyst of that shadow science,—for him who best could tell in what order they pass and combine, and best could predict their recurrence,—think you that this freedman would covet their distinctions, even the loftiest? Or would not rather say with Homer, that it were better to be a peasant's hireling in the upper world? . . . . But once again; suppose him to re-descend into the cavern, and take his seat in his old place: in this passage from clear day to darkness will not his eyes be as it were full of darkness? . . . . And if while he still sees confusedly, not yet accustomed to the darkness, which requires some

time, he is called on to give his opinion on the shadows, and dispute with his fettered companions, will there not be a universal laugh at his expense? Will they not be sure to say, that from going to such heights the poor man has lost his sight, that it is clearly not worth while to attempt leaving their places, and that if any one proposes such schemes he be, if possible, caught and dispatched?.... This, then, Glauco, is the picture of our condition! The subterranean dwelling is this visible world; the fire which illuminates it is the light of the sun; this captive who escapes to the higher region and contemplates it, is the soul that rises into the intelligible place.... At the utmost bounds of the intellectual world is the Idea of Good, perceived with difficulty, but which once seen makes itself known as the cause of all that is Beautiful and Good....

Plato was profoundly impressed with the value and importance, and even the absolute necessity, of a proper education. The educated soul, from his standpoint, goes from an evil condition to a worse. In the *Timaeus* he says that if one receives the right kind of an education he will become perfectly sound and healthy, escaping every serious disease; whereas he who neglects his soul will pass lamely and badly along the path of life, and again pass into Hades aimless and destitute of intelligence.

If you want virtue in the state, you must first take care that the individual has it. The state is simply the individual on a large scale, possessing all of his virtues, and likewise all of his vices.

To sum up: the Platonic theory is that education should be primarily moral and spiritual—not mechanical or utilitarian—having for its ultimate end the ascent of the soul to the Supreme Good; that the specific object of education should be the development of moral and intellectual character; that a purely mental education, severed from a moral, and having no reference to true spiritual culture, is not only worthless but positively deleterious. T. M. J.

### TEACHING MORALITY.\*

MENO: "Can you tell me, Socrates, is virtue to be taught? or is it to be not taught, but acquired by mental exercise? or does it come to man neither by mental exercise nor teaching, but by nature or some other means?"

SOCRATES: I blame myself, Meno, for being totally ignorant of virtue. How, then, can I know the quality of that of which I know nothing? or do you think it possible for a man wholly ignorant who Meno is, to know whether Meno is a handsome or rich or generous spirit, or the reverse of all these characteristics?

MENO: I do not think it possible. But in good sooth, Socrates, do you really not know what virtue is? and shall I send home this report of you?

SOCRATES: Not only that, my friend, but this further, that I never met any where with any person who, as I think, did know.

MENO: Did you never, then, meet with Gorgias when he was here?

SOCRATES: I did.

MENO: And did *he* not seem to you to know?

SOCRATES: I do not perfectly remember, Meno; so that I am not able to tell at present what I then thought of him. *But perhaps*, both he knew

\*An Essay read before the Unitarian Conference, Bloomington, Ill., Oct. 3, 1889.

himself, and you too, what he said. Do you then bring to my recollection what he said; or, if you would rather, tell it in your own words; for surely you agree with him in opinion.

MENO: I do.

SOCRATES: Let us then put him aside, especially as he is absent. But by the gods do *you*, *Meno*, tell me yourself what you assert virtue to be, and do not grudge me the knowledge of it, in order that I may have uttered a most fortunate untruth should both you and Gorgias appear to know what I said I had never met with a person who did know.

MENO: Nay, Socrates, it is by no means difficult to tell. In the first place, if you wish me to tell the virtue of a man, it is easy,—a man's virtue consists in his being competent to manage the affairs of the state, and managing them to do good to its friends and evil to its enemies, and to take care that he suffers himself nothing of that kind. Then if you wish to know the virtue of a woman, it is not difficult to go through the particulars,—that it is to manage well the affairs of her family, to keep safe the things in the house, and to hearken to her husband. Another kind of virtue is that of the child, either a girl or boy, and of a man advanced in years, and if you choose to go on, of a free man and of a slave. Many more virtues there are of all kinds, so that there is no want of power to tell concerning virtue what it is.

SOCRATES: I think myself greatly indeed favored by fortune, *Meno*, for when I was only in quest of one virtue, I have found it seems a whole swarm of virtues hiving with you."

Socrates then goes on with his peculiar form of questioning, to search for the common element called virtue in the different actions of statesmen, the woman managing her household, the child, and the servant, and asks,—

(SOCRATES) "Will there be any difference in virtue, with respect to its being virtue, whether it be

in the child or in the aged person, in a man or in a woman?"

And so he slowly draws from Meno the admission that *justice* is virtue, and also by the same sort of questioning that *courage* is virtue, *temperance* and *wisdom*.

He then proceeds to get from Meno the admission that courage differs from temperance, temperance differs from justice, and so plunges his companion into a hopeless tangle between the split up fractions of virtue, and comes around again with the same old question, "what is virtue in itself?" And then when Meno turns upon him, asking Socrates what he thinks, with his usual smooth method of evasion he declares that he does not know, as he said at the beginning, and never found any one who did know.

By this part of the dialogue Socrates means simply that he does not think the sophists' plan of talking of things in the abstract was good, and yet he grants so much to his companion, that he will consider hypothetically the more important practical question with him, whether or not virtue may be taught, to use his own words:

SOCRATES: "Hypothetically, as geometers often do in treating a question when one asks them as it were about a space, whether it is possible for this space to be placed triangularly within this, a geometer would answer, if the space be of such a kind, . . . . there would be I think one result, but if the space be of this other kind, the result would be different. And thus too concerning virtue, since we know not either what it is or what is its quality, we will lay down a hypothesis and consider whether it is to be taught or not, by stating the question thus: If virtue be in its quality one of the things which belongs to the soul, is it to be taught or not to be taught? In the first place, if it is either different from knowledge or of the same kind with it, is virtue, or is it not, to be taught? Or, as we said just now, to be recollected, for which ever of these expressions we

use, let it make no difference to us. Is then virtue (our hypothesis being so) to be taught? Now is it not evident to everyone that a man is taught no other thing than knowledge?

MENO: To me it seems so.

SOCRATES: If then virtue be a kind of knowledge, it is evident that virtue is to be taught.

MENO: For how not?

SOCRATES: From this question then we have been quickly relieved, that if virtue be such a kind of thing it is to be taught, but not if it be not such a kind of thing.

MENO: Very true.

SOCRATES: Next after this we must consider whether virtue be knowledge or apart from knowledge.

MENO: We must, I think, consider this in the next place.

SOCRATES: Well now, say we that virtue is anything else but a good, and shall we abide by this hypothesis that virtue is a good?

MENO: By all means.

SOCRATES: Now if there be also any other good apart from knowledge, then perhaps virtue may not be a kind of knowledge. But if there be no good which knowledge does not comprehend, then in suspecting virtue to be a kind of knowledge, we should suspect justly.

MENO: It is so.

SOCRATES: And yet through virtue at least we are good.

MENO: Yes.

SOCRATES: And if good, then useful. For all things that are good are useful, are they not?

MENO: They are.

SOCRATES: Virtue then is a thing useful.

MENO: It must needs be from what has been admitted.

SOCRATES: Now let us consider what sort of things, taking each by itself, are useful to us. Health,

we say, and strength, and beauty and wealth. These things and others of a like kind we call useful do we not?

MENO: We do.

SOCRATES: And say we not that these very things are sometimes hurtful to us? or do you say otherwise? or thus?

MENO: Not otherwise, but thus."

So the questioning goes on to the conclusion that such things as beauty, health, wealth and strength are useful or hurtful according as they are prudently or imprudently handled or used. We take up the dialogue again at this point:

SOCRATES: "This then we may say universally, that in the case of man all the other things depend on his soul, but the things belonging to the soul itself depend on prudence if they are to be beneficial. And by this reasoning prudence would be the useful. But we said that virtue was useful. Do we not therefore assert that prudence is virtue, either wholly or in part?

MENO: What has been said seems to me, Socrates, to have been well said.

SOCRATES: If then it be so, the good are not good by nature.

MENO: It seems to me they are not.

SOCRATES: For if the good were good by nature, we should have some persons who would know the youths who were naturally good over whom, when those had shown them to us, we should place a guard in the citadel, putting a seal on them rather than on gold, so that no person might corrupt them, and that when they arrived at manhood they might become useful to the state.

MENO: It were reasonable to do so, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Since then the good are not good by nature, are they so by learning?

MENO: I think this is of necessity so. And it is plain, Socrates, that if according to the hypothesis virtue is a science, it is to be taught.



SOCRATES: Perhaps so, by Jove! But did we admit that correctly?

MENO: It yet but lately seemed to be fairly said."

Nevertheless they go back over the ground again, and especially bring out this point, that if they are right in concluding that virtue consists of knowledge, and is thus teachable, it is a very strange thing that so many of the best men in Greece reared sons who were not virtuous.

"Have you not heard," cries Socrates, "that Themistocles caused his son Cleophantus to be taught to be a good horseman? For example, he remained standing upright upon horses, and upright too upon horses he threw a javelin, and performed many other surprising feats in which his father had caused him to be instructed. But have you ever heard that Cleophantus, the son of Themistocles, became a good and wise man as did his father: have you ever heard this from any person, either young or old?"

To this the answer is, "No indeed," and then Socrates goes on: "Do you imagine then that he wished to bring up his own son in such studies, and yet in the wisdom where he himself was wise not to make his son at all better than his neighbors if virtue could be taught?"

The answer to this is significant: it is, literally translated, "By Jove, perhaps not;" that is to say, a very emphatic expression of confusion about the whole matter, a confusion some of which at least the careful reader must attribute, after reading both the *Meno* and the *Protagoras*, to Plato himself.

Plato's conclusion in the *Meno* is that virtue very probably could be taught if the teachers could be found, but some how or other there were no teachers to be found.

It was very evident that only men who were wise and virtuous could become such teachers, but it was also equally evident that they never made any virtuous disciples.

In the *Protagoras* Socrates' opponent starts out with the easy assumption that virtue may be taught, and Socrates quite fairly takes the position that it cannot be taught, and the dialogue ends by the disputants finding themselves clear around the circle, Socrates urging that virtue is equivalent to knowledge, and therefore teachable, while his opponent holds that virtue cannot possibly be taught.

I have spent this much time in placing before you as well as I could the thought of Plato, because in his thought and discussion he went quite to the root of the difficulties in which this question of teaching morality is involved to-day, although we cannot say that he solved them.

Often as we read or hear the easy discussions of our time about teaching morality in the public schools, we find it is assumed without question or hesitation that if only we were willing to expend money enough to do it, there was no doubt but that morality could be taught.

The real opinion of Plato, if he had one, seems to be that virtue belonged to the nature of the soul itself, and that all that could be taught was knowledge, and that knowledge, though helpful to one naturally fated to be virtuous, would not of itself produce virtue where that natural disposition was wanting.

Although perhaps Plato does not express this opinion anywhere with perfect clearness, I can but wish he had, because for my own part I feel so confident if not of its perfect soundness, yet of the great truth in it

And this is pretty much the sum of what I wished to say to-day, namely, that teaching in the ordinary sense of that term, consists simply in the imparting of information, and that no amount of information imparted to a child upon any or upon all subjects, will necessarily result in morality.

And yet I think no mistake is more common than the supposition that if only children knew about morals, and their reasons, they would themselves im-

mediately embody those good principles in their conduct.

Why, we have a school book, or a book made for a school book, and very well made it is too, that is written, printed and published upon this supposition. I refer to the book by Mr. Austin Bierbower, called "The Virtues, and their Reasons."

Perhaps I am mistaken, or may assume too much, but I leave the question with you,—was not this book printed and sent out on the supposition that if children were once informed completely and perfectly about morals and their reasons, that that information would somehow make them moral beings?

Perhaps it is assuming too much. But while upon this point, I will pause to say that in that book, well written as it is, I seriously doubt whether there is anything upon the subject of the reasons for the virtues, that has not already naturally occurred, I will say to any child of ten years of age.

For instance, we are told in regard to veracity, of the consequences of lying. The probability is that every child of ten years of age understands that if he lies he may be caught in it, as he would express it perhaps, and the serious consequences that may ensue he perfectly anticipates.

I have often said, and I wish to take this occasion to say again, that I believe a very good moral code, almost a perfect one, might be derived from any ten year old child that you should pick up in the street, provided you were able to make the child understand the meaning of your questions, and that it had sufficient language to express its real thoughts and beliefs upon the question.

Certainly it is true that from any band of criminals in any of our prisons, we might derive such a perfect moral code, drawing from them their real beliefs as to what was right and wrong under such and such circumstances.

The sum of the whole matter is that it is not for lack of understanding the principles of morality, either

in children or men, that we have the lapses from good conduct that are so common, that there exists the immorality that does exist in our modern society.

Now perhaps I have used the word teaching in too narrow a sense: I am sure at least that some people when they speak of teaching morals, and others when they speak of ethical culture, mean quite as much in the way of *training* and bringing to bear those influences which result in the formation of habits, as they mean of *simple instruction*.

Well, when we come to this the whole life of child and man is a course of training in the way of conduct, training in which some have marked advantages over others because of their more fortunate ways of life, not that all the advantages are with either rich or poor, the learned or the unlearned.

But when we come to this sort of training, experience is the teacher, and we are all just fools enough to learn in no other way.

I would like to enlarge this paper a good deal in this direction, if time would serve,—would like to say and show so far as I might what influences we may bring to bear most effectively and effectually in the formation of the characters of our children.

Probably the strongest influence or force of all that is brought to bear upon us, either as children or men, is the love of approval, the thought of what others will think or say.

This I will say, with children at least, seems the turning point more often than any abstract consideration of what is right in the matter, or of what the consequences will be.

It is doubtless a sort of convenient way of bringing conscience to bear, of measuring consequences, a short way of forming a correct judgment, to call the imagination to aid, by way of thinking what father or mother, teacher or friend, would say or think.

But let us especially keep it in mind that morality consists of good habits, and that habits are formed, and not taught. Let us keep it in mind that no

amount of good advice has much effect in this way.

Habits are formed through absolute requirements, through the necessities of the way of life in which one walks. And all the good habits of the individual, when taken together, produce what is commonly spoken of as his moral character.

And when we speak of that deeper moral character, which consists of what he is, in his deepest nature, that is formed not through good instruction or good advice so much as through the sum of all of one's experiences, and especially through one's affections.

The people that the child loves, the people that he associates with, their ways of action, their likes and dislikes, their example, are most potent influences in the formation of the deeper character.

And this is why it is true that the personal influence of a teacher in a school, or a Sunday School teacher, simply in the way of the conversation and association with the children, is often of far more value than anything in the way of instruction that is given in the lesson.

Hoping that I have said enough, at least to start a profitable discussion, I will, without summing up my random thoughts and disjointed sentences, stop here.

DAVID UTTER.



## LETTER FROM M. ST. HILAIRE.\*

[Translated.]

DEAR SIR:—I respond very willingly to your request, and thank you for offering me an opportunity to speak of the translation of Plato by M. Victor Cousin. I have wished ever since his death—twenty-two years ago—to write the biography of this illustrious friend; but my time has been so fully occupied with political duties on the one hand, and on the other with attempting the complete translation of Aristotle, which is not yet finished, that I have been prevented from rendering to the memory of M. Cousin, the homage, gratitude and admiration which I owe him. He bequeathed to me his correspondence, which is most interesting, and will be of great value in aiding me to write the history his life.

I shall yet make use of it if God permits me to live a while longer, after an existence which has already far surpassed the ordinary limits.

I confine myself to-day to a few remarks concerning the translation of Plato by M. Victor Cousin. They are intended more especially for the pages of your BIBLIOTHECA PLATONICA, which renews in the New World the generous attempts of the Renaissance.

\*Philosophy is much indebted to the labors of this distinguished scholar and statesman. His annotated French translation of Aristotle—which we trust that he will soon be able to complete—is one of the best modern versions of the writings of the Sage of the Lyceum, and is specially valuable; and his treatise *De l'Ecole d'Alexandrie* (1845) is an interesting and meritorious work.

M. Victor Cousin was in 1820 obstructed in his teaching by the illiberal reaction which set in after the assassination of the Duke of Berri. This reaction drove him from the Professor's chair which he then occupied in the "Faculty of Letters" of Paris. Condemned to silence for eight years he could not return to his Professorship until 1828. This long interval he consecrated to literary labors, the most profound and important. It was in 1822 that he published the first volume of his translation of Plato. During this one year he produced the first five volumes. From 1823 to 1831 this work was interrupted, but during this last year the sixth volume appeared. The entire work, however, was not finished until 1840,—nine years later, when M. Victor Cousin became Minister of Public Instruction under the Presidency of M. Thiers.

In the first five volumes each dialogue was preceded by a Commentary, which well explained its meaning and purport. In no other of his writings was the style of M. Victor Cousin ever more brilliant. These Commentaries frequently throw new light on the Platonic text, and their value will long continue to be appreciated by the student. To the regret of the friends of philosophy and literature the Commentaries were omitted from the sixth volume, but again appeared in the seventh,—that which contains the Laws. They are not however prefixed to the remaining dialogues, and it is this blank or gap which has left the monument imperfect. While continuing the translation suspended in 1823, M. Victor Cousin published in 1831 a prospectus outlining his plan, of which I have the printer's proof corrected by his own hand. In this interesting paper he speaks forcibly upon the necessity and importance of a French translation of Plato. We will attempt to analyze this document, so little known, wherein he outlines the model upon which he directs the power of his thought.

At that time there had not been a complete translation in French of the works of Plato. Even



some of the principal dialogues had never been translated; for instance, the *Parmenides*, *Timaeus*, *Phaedrus*, and several others of no less interest. Maucroix and Dacier had, in the seventeenth century, very acceptably translated a few of them, but more for their literary excellence than for their philosophical deductions. And in the eighteenth century the learned Jesuit Father Grou gave to the world of letters another partial translation, containing however the same defect. This was all that French learning had done towards the rendering of the sublime philosophy of Plato in our language, before the grand effort of Victor Cousin.

It is here necessary to add, that about this period the works of Plato had engrossed the attention of the literati of Germany and their deep and lively criticism of Platonism rendered it absolutely necessary for the learned of other nations to take notice. This was one more motive to incite to a work which the two preceding centuries had not known how to accomplish, and the work to be done was one essentially philosophical. It was therefore to this task that the Professor dedicated himself on his return to his chair. Being appointed as one of the Royal Council of the University, on the accession of the Minister Martignac after 1830, he was then in a position to serve philosophy more effectively than ever.

However, M. Cousin felt that it was no use to attempt to vie with Plato in grace or beauty, all that possibly could be done was to reproduce his simplicity, and it was to this modest labor that he devoted himself. He corrected and utilized the versions of the dialogues already translated, and added those dialogues not previously translated, making in all twelve volumes. Thanks therefore to M. Victor Cousin, France possesses Plato complete in her own language.

It would have been difficult to have rendered a greater service not only to French philosophy but to philosophy at large. Our language, which in some respects may appear inferior, has this incomparable

advantage, that it is the most perspicuous of all. In the French idiom Platonism may be better understood than in any other. To have a Plato, illumined by the vivifying thought and philosophical mind of M. Cousin, was for France especially a veritable fortune. His style is worthy of the seventeenth century, that grand epoch in the history of French literature, and his ability to present to the world the sublime thoughts of the Greek Philosopher in this most exquisite and subtle language is of the gravest import, not only for the development of the highest order of national spirit, but for religious or spiritualistic thought, which has never had higher expression than in the Platonic system.

We may here reply to the detractors of M. Victor Cousin, who have questioned his Greek scholarship, and have criticised him harshly and unjustly. Their objections are absurd. Nothing in our language, a language remarkable for its power of defining even shades of thought, has ever equalled this translation. It is quite probable that none hereafter will surpass it. From now on until long in the future, by those who cannot even approach the original text, this translation will be thus regarded. This alone is glory enough for M. Victor Cousin, without a multitude of other honors no less legitimate. Some may do more than he, but in a literary sense none will succeed better.

We believe that this is a very just eulogy, and above all one that could be rarely given in relation to any literary effort that attempted a true rendition of the Platonic style, as beautiful in its kind as any master piece of Greek genius.

High authority indeed, and judge of literary art, himself a consummate artist, M. Victor Cousin had cherished the thought of classifying and estimating the dialogues of Plato from this point of view. He had occupied himself with this at different times, and his intimate friends and some few of his disciples were frequently consulted upon the subject. But he

was never able fully to carry out his project, which was one of more than ordinary difficulty, as indeed are all such tasks where taste is appealed to, to render a sovereign decision. It was also the intention of M. Cousin to write a preface to his translation, which would have been a noble frontispiece to this scholarly production, but he was never able to accomplish what he meditated. This work of philosophical aesthetics therefore awaits another hand.

Nevertheless, in an article which was published in the *GLOBE* of November 3d, 1827, he outlined his design. We shall merely indicate this outline and will confine ourselves to saying that M. Cousin distinguishes three characteristics in the style of Plato or rather three epochs in his life as a metaphysician.

The first, which corresponds to youth, is full of enthusiasm and of mysticism; of poesy and dithyramb; a twilight religious and irregular. The second, that of mature life, somewhat dry and dialectical, but full of pure and elevated reasoning and analytical research. The third characteristic consists in the harmonious blending of the other two which penetrating each other reciprocally produced that perfect expression of spiritual thought which gained for Plato the surname of Divine.

Such in a few words is the epitome of the article in the *GLOBE*. It is good to consult it. The object which was there mapped out would consequently have been the methodical classification of the dialogues, but at the time when M. Cousin thus wrote, he was in no position to risk the publication. Later on he lacked the time, and eventually death came, leaving the plan of his early manhood unaccomplished.

We know not how to regret it too much. Who can hope to be more successful in this scholarly and delicate restoration? Almost up to his last moment M. Victor Cousin intended to complete this unfinished work. To accomplish it was his life dream. The evening before his death at Cannes we were speaking of it, and I recalled to him how useful it would be if

he could make a second and final edition. He agreed with me, but replied that he was then too old to undertake it, and wished me to promise to do it after I had finished the translation of Aristotle. The next day after our conversation he died from a stroke of apoplexy, while breakfasting with me, and expired in my arms January 14th, 1867, at 5 minutes past 5 A. M. It is now twenty-three years since that catastrophe and the second edition yet remains to be produced.

I do not wish, my dear sir, to close this letter without congratulating you on the founding of the BIBLIOTHECA PLATONICA. It is an honor to North America to have taken this initiative step. Everything which spreads Platonism is of immense benefit to humanity. Platonic teaching has the fruitful merit of having first taught man that he is composed of two principles, spirit and matter,—the rational soul which we are, and the animal which is in us. The moral life of the individual is good or bad according as he allows to predominate in him the one or other of these two principles. In America you are fortunate in that the religious sentiment is always very powerful, and that your customs submit to its salutary influence. Religion is then on this principal point in accord with Platonism. Religion may strengthen it, and it may in turn strengthen religion. There are other countries less religious where the spread of Platonism is much more necessary than with you. But we must nevertheless, praise you for devoting yourself to it with so much energy, because it is good to recall under every form the superior principle to the attention and practice of men who too often forget and outrage it.

Your BIBLIOTHECA PLATONICA will contribute to this result. On this account it merits all the success which the friends of philosophy and religion ought to wish for it.

Your very respectfully,

B. ST. HILAIRE.

PARIS, BOULEVARD FLANDRIN 4,  
November 28th 1889.

## MISCELLANEA.

**ARMENIAN VERSIONS OF PLATO.**—It is not generally known that there exist in an ancient Armenian translation considerable portions of Plato, namely the *Euthyphron*, *Apology of Sokrates*, *Timaeus*, *Minos* and *Laus* (12 books). The date of this version is not certain. An Armenian named Gregor Magistros who lived in the first half of the eleventh century, in a letter written to one Sergius, Abbot of the monastery of Sevan near Erivan, mentions a translation made by himself of the *Phaedon* and *Timaeus*. Quite literally translated the relevant part of his letter would thus run in English:—‘And now you will be eager to dilate upon these things out of your philosophical knowledge. For I have not ever paused from translation of many books which I have not found in our tongue, the two books of Plato, the *Timaeus* and *Phaedo*, in which the whole doctrine of that seer is contained and of many others of the philosophers. Each of these books is larger than a missal. But I have also found written in the Armenian tongue by the translators the book of Olompiodorus, which David mentions, very admirable and beautiful poems, equal to the whole of philosophical discourses. I have also found the books of Kallimachus and of Andronikus in the Armenian tongue’..... The Armenian *Phaedo* is lost, and, even if the version of the *Timaeus* be admitted to be the work of Gregor Magistros, it would not follow that the versions of the other dialogues—which differ somewhat in style therefrom—were also made by him. Anyhow he is the latest Armenian writer who could have produced them, for the practice of translating from the Greek died with him. Thus these versions of Plato belong at the latest to the first decades of the eleventh century. I believe them myself to belong to a much earlier time, to the eighth and perhaps even to the fifth century.... Whatever their exact date may be, they are of great interest in themselves because they enable us to correct in some particulars all existing texts of Plato, not excepting that of the Bodleian or Clarkian codex. The translation is usually very exact, word for word, slavishly literal, and by its very blunders testifying that it was made from an uncial Greek manuscript,.....”

—Fred. C. Conybeare in the CLASSICAL REVIEW for October, 1889.

**HEGEL ON PLATO.**—We have had several inquiries as to the value of Hegel’s exposition or account of the Platonic doctrines, in his History of Philosophy. This account was translated by Dr. W. T. Harris, and published in the fourth vol. of the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. Dr. Harris and other ardent Hegelians apparently attribute great value to this exposition, believing it to be a faithful and comprehensive interpretation. It should be said, however, in justice to Dr.

Harris, that he has never professed to have any special or profound knowledge of the Platonic philosophy. The fact is, we know of no Hegelian in this country who has a thorough and accurate knowledge of the sublime philosophy of Plato. Hegel's account, while appreciative and accurate to a certain extent, and therefore worth reading, is, taken as a whole, but superficial: it is in several important particulars not only misleading but absolutely erroneous.

A word of warning may be given to students of the Academic Sage: if one wishes to master the Platonic text he must not waste any time on inferior thinkers. He should confine himself to the exhaustless writings of the Divine Master, and those of his faithful expositors.

ONE NOTICE.—The *Revue Critique* for the 18th of Nov., 1889, has a somewhat curious notice of the *BIBLIOTHECA PLATONICA* by M. Lucien Herr. M. Herr apparently does not favor the establishment of a periodical devoted exclusively to Plato and his school. He thinks that such a periodical is superfluous, etc. M. Herr seems to stand alone in his opinion, to which he is heartily welcome. The mission of our journal is absolutely unique. No other periodical covers the same field, or attempts to cover it. It is, to use M. Herr's words, a *oeuvre de propagande platonicienne et d'érangelisation neoplatonicienne*.

M. Herr further says that it is now out of fashion to apply the term *divine* to Plato; that applied to Plotinos it is suspicious, and to Porphyrios more than alarming. Our critic must possess his soul in patience. He will often find, at least if he continues to read the *BIBLIOTHECA PLATONICA*, Plato, Plotinos, Porphyrios—aye even other members of the Platonic School—characterized as *divine*. We hazard the prediction that this laudable custom will never be 'out of fashion' among genuine Platonists.

ANOTHER NOTICE.—In the October No. (1889) of the *Journal Des Savants* there is an appreciative notice of our Review by M. Henri Weil the eminent Grecian and Philologist. M. Weil says:

"It is generally believed that America is occupied only by commercial and mechanical pursuits. This is a mistake: there are in that country many who cultivate philosophy, history, and even the Greek and Latin literature. It is the land of the future, and if by ill-fortune classical studies should ever be relinquished in our old Europe, we may expect that America will pick up the torch. Here is the first part of a review consecrated entirely to Platon, which comes to us from the far West, and contains articles interesting in various respects. We find in the first place An Attempt to Determine the Chronological Order of the Dialogues of Platon. The question is treated according to a severe philological method; the author not even recoiling before the tabulation of the derivatives and figures often more or less employed in the different works of the philosopher. M. Lewis Campbell it is true belongs to a Scotch university; but his dissertation has the same characteristics as the remarkable treatises of M. Gildersleve and other savants who contribute to the *American Journal of Philology* at Baltimore. Entirely different is the paper, or rather discourse, of Dr. Alexander Wilder entitled *Platonic Reflections on the Nature of the Soul*. From erudition we pass to inspiration (enthousiasme). The author believes with Platon in the pre-existence of the soul; indeed he is not sure, of not having himself seen in another life some things which strike him as old acquaintances. His discourse is a lyric effusion, in which the doctrine of Platon is blended with that of the New Testament, Eleusinian Mysteries, and all the Religions of the Orient. To have heard him, the Pharisees themselves would have believed in the transmigration of souls. A note informs us that this treatise 'was

read at a Symposium given on the 7th day of November, 1883, in celebration of the descent of Platon upon earth at the home of the Editor of the BIBLIOTHECA PLATONICA at Osceola. Mrs. Julia P. Stevens will give a similar Symposium at her residence at Bloomington, Illinois, the 7th day of November next." These are doubtless the adepts of a New Platonian Academy. M. Ch. E. Ruelle contributes a few pages of the Preface to his edition of Damascius. An anonymous writer [the Editor] furnishes an English translation of the Life of Plotinos by Porphyrios. It is quite natural that the Neo-Platonists of the nineteenth century should perceive themselves in accord with those of the last centuries of Antiquity. The founding of a Platonic Review beyond the Mississippi is a fact unexpected, wonderful; the taste for learning, the study of the history of philosophy, is not sufficient to explain it; there must be something more powerful, a mystic enthusiasm resulting as much from religion as from Philosophy."

SECURE THE ACADEMY!—*We desire to call the attention of Platonists throughout the world to the fact that the site of the ancient Academy at Athens, Greece, could probably be secured by prompt and concerted action. Proper measures should be taken at once to organize an association having for its object the purchase, preservation and restoration of the place where Plato lived and taught, and where his disciples continued his sublime and enlightening work for centuries. It should be rescued from the hands of the profane, and set aside for the perpetual use and benefit of all true followers of Divine Philosophy. There is no good reason why, in due time, the Platonic School should not again flourish on its original site, and again become, as it once was, the nursery of Science and Wisdom for the whole world.*

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

The Clarendon Press announces an edition of the Republic by Profs. Jowett and Campbell, two most competent scholars. This is good news, and we trust that the book will speedily appear. A complete edition of the original text of the Republic, with English introduction and notes, is badly needed. Mr. Warren's recent edition of the first five books—which is excellent within its scope—considers "Plato rather as a man of letters than as a philosopher." We sincerely hope that the Editors of the forthcoming edition will deal adequately with the philosophy of the Republic—the masterpiece of the greatest thinker of any age.

An edition of the Euthyphron by Mr. J. Adam, M. A., Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, England, will shortly be published. Mr. Adam, who is a capable scholar and an enthusiastic Platonist, has already given us useful editions of the Apology and Crito, and we learn that he will next undertake an edition of the Symposium.

A bibliographical *resume* to date of Platonic literature in France by M. Chas. Huit will appear in our next number. M. Huit is specially well qualified to prepare this *resume*. He is a Platonist of *pur sang*, and his scholarship is of a high order. His numerous writings on Platonic subjects are of great value.

The second part of Prof. Ch. Emile Ruelle's admirable edition of the great and important work of Damaskios *On First Principles* has appeared. In No. 3 we hope to give an extended review of it.

A paper by Dr. C. Wessely, of Vienna, Austria, entitled *De ultimis Neoplatonicarum doctrinarum reliquiis* will be published in an early number. We apprehend that our learned readers will find it alike interesting and valuable.

The *Alandae*, edited by Mr. Carlo Arrigo Ulrichs Ph. D., Aquila,



Abuzzo Ulteriore, Italy, is a little journal in the Latin language which is of peculiar interest to the classical scholar. It is full of a variety of excellent matter.

*Ontologia Platonica ad notionum Terminorumque Historiam Symbola* (Lips. 1883) by Dr. David Peipers, Professor of Philosophy in the University of Göttingen, Germany, is a meritorious book which it will pay the student of Plato to get and master.

ATHENA (*Ἀθήνα*) is a high-class quarterly periodical, published at Athens, Greece. It is chiefly devoted to philological and scientific investigations. The existence of a quarterly of this character speaks well for the intellectual progress of Hellas.

Several weeks ago looking over the list of Platonic writings appended to the Oxford edition (1867) of Alcinoüs we noted (p. 106): "*Fratri Beroaldi Expositio super Elementatione Theologiae Procli habetur MS. in Collegio Baleioliensi Oxonii.*" Holding the work of Proklos on the Elements of Theology in high esteem we naturally desired to ascertain as to the present existence, and value, of this Commentary. We therefore wrote to Mr. F. W. Bussell M. A., Fellow of Brazen Nose College, Oxford, requesting him to make some inquiries about the MS. in question. We are indebted to his kindness, and the courtesy of Mr. F. Madan, Sub-librarian of Balliol Col., for the following information: "The MS. at Balliol College about which you have recently written . . . is no doubt No. "CCXIV. B" in the catalogue of the MSS. at the College. But it has nothing to do with any Beroaldus. It is an exposition in Latin of the *Elementatio Theologica* of Proclus by Bertheoldus or Bertheoldus, a German Dominican of Mosburg; and the MS. was written in A. D. 1444. The MS. is a large folio in size, and the text and commentary together occupy 344 double columns (with the indexes.)"

It would be interesting to learn something more of Brother Bertheoldus and his writings. We shall print a few pages at least of this Commentary. The *Theological Elements* (*Στοιχειώδεις θεολογικαί*) of Proklos, who was one of the brightest lights of the Platonic School, is a subtle treatise dealing with the most abstruse subjects, and any aid to the understanding of its text will doubtless be gladly welcomed by all students of Philosophy.

We heartily commend to the attention of our philosophic readers the *Vedantin*, a monthly magazine, devoted to the exposition and dissemination of the Advaita Philosophy. The Advaita is the highest and most profound of all the Indian systems of Philosophy, and is specially attractive to the Platonist, as in many respects its teachings are identical with those of the immortal Master of the Academy. The *Vedantin* richly deserves, and we hope will receive, a liberal support, both in India and other countries.

Vedanta in Christ's Teachings. Reprinted from the *Vedantin*. Saidapet (Madras), India, 1889. Price 4 pence, (about 10 cents). This pamphlet is worth reading. It points out the essential agreement of many of the teachings of Christ with the Advaita doctrine.